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Lyra Liturgica.

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Lyra Liturgica.

REFLECTIONS IN VERSE

FOR

HOLY DAYS AND SEASONS.

*Cantabiles mihi erant justificationes Tuæ in loco
peregrinationis meæ. Ps. cxviii. 54.*

5. 2.

LONDON:

BURNS, LAMBERT, AND OATES,

17 Portman Street, Portman Square.

1865.

147. g. 22.



TO THE
REVEREND WILLIAM IGNATIUS DOLAN,
FOR THE LAST FIFTEEN YEARS
MY ZEALOUS AND FAITHFUL COADJUTOR
IN PAROCHIAL DUTIES,

This Little Volume
IS INSCRIBED
AS A TRIBUTE OF GRATITUDE AND ESTEEM.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THIS little work differs from others of its class in consisting, not of hymns, properly so called, but of thoughts in verse ; and in offering to the reader a series of such thoughts adapted to the successive Seasons of the Church. It is, so far, an attempt to apply to portions of the Catholic Liturgy the method of illustration so beautifully exemplified in the *Christian Year* ; though its form and character are sufficiently its own to secure its author, as he trusts, against the suspicion of any such presumptuous and hopeless design as that of producing a counterpart to a work in many ways so inimitable.

One obvious difference, among others, between Mr. Keble's plan and that of the present series, is that whereas Mr. Keble has furnished meditations for every Sunday in the year, and for all the received holydays of the Anglican Calendar, as well as the Occasional Services, this little work embraces but a limited portion of the mighty range of devotional illustration opened by the Liturgy of

the Catholic Church. The purpose to which it is directed is rather that of following out trains of thought suggested by particular offices and ceremonies than of providing the reader with aids to reflection on the different celebrations of the Church in their integrity. Yet, as the series is regular so far as it goes, the verses have been referred to the successive Quarters of the Ecclesiastical Year, according to the arrangement of the Breviary.

The idea upon which the work is founded has been for many years in the writer's mind; but he has delayed giving expression to it, partly from want of leisure, and partly in the hope that it might find some better exponent. An unforeseen circumstance has removed the former difficulty; and when the work was once in manuscript, the question of publishing it was determined by the opinion of friends, who were so kind as to think that it might do some service to the cause of religion.

F. O.

ST. JOHN'S, ISLINGTON,

Feast of Corpus Christi, 1865.

John Oakeley

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INTRODUCTORY.

Holy Ceremonies.

I.

I have loved, O Lord, the beauty of Thy House, and the place
where Thy glory dwelleth. *Ps.* xxv. 8.

I LOVE, O Lord, the beauty of Thy House,
I love the place wherein Thy glory dwells ;
I love the silent speech, and sweet accord,
Of holy ceremonies, dear to faith,
Wherein, as in a mirror, shows the zeal
That burns around the Throne of GOD, and breaks
Into a thousand forms of active joy.

I love to hear the white-rob'd semi-choirs
Discourse of GOD in David's loyal song,
And sum the import of each lofty Psalm
In full-voic'd Antiphon,* or teach in hymn,
And sweet Magnificat, its Christian sense ;
And note in prayer, or 'memory'† devout,

* The Antiphon is usually the key-note to the Church's interpretation of the Psalm which it precedes and follows.

† The Commemoration (*Fr. mémoire*) of some other Saint than the one of the day.

The glories of the Saint whose aid we crave
To lead us closer to the Fount of Grace.

I love the long Procession, as it winds
Through spacious aisle or circling colonnade,
With cross erect, and banners waving high ;
While strains of festive praise, or solemn plaint,
Or strong entreaty, surge upon the ear.

But most I love the pomp that gathers round
The Saving Victim, as in love He comes,
At sacerdotal bidding, to renew,
In bloodless form, the Sacrifice of Blood ;
Or mounts His Sacramental Throne, to shed
Calm benediction on adoring crowds.
For this doth image, in terrestrial guise,
The Worship of the Lamb—a glimpse of Heav'n ;
Where angels bow their heads, and veil their eyes,
And wave their golden thuribules, and wake
Unearthly music from their myriad harps.

Since then Thou grantest sinners thus a share
In acts so glorious and in gifts so rare ;
Teach us, dear Lord, obedient to Thy rule,
To con Heaven's lessons in the Church's school ;

Lest, prone to earth, and soil'd by sinful stain,
We touch Thy holy things with hands profane ;
Forget Thy Presence, though Thy steps be near,
And verge on Angels' ground with less than Angels'
fear.

Holy Ceremonies.



II.

MOTHER of Saints ! how beautiful thou art !

In speech how gracious, how august in mien !
Guide of the conscience, mistress of the heart ;
In all thy steps confess'd a Sovereign Queen.

There are who count thy comely pomp a show ;
Thy ceremonies, gauds for children meet ;
Their cavils move me not, for well I know
How lovely are thy ways, thy words how sweet.

Kings have their marshals, palaces their state,
E'en Christian homes their forms and courtesies ;
For Reverence must on Love obsequious wait,
And Love that lacks respect decays and dies.

And shall Thy House, O King of kings, alone
No signal tokens of Thy power display?
Shall no glad courtiers muster near Thy throne,
No duteous escort guard Thee on Thy way?

Forbid it, Lord! nor let the world intrude
Her lawless maxims on Thy virgin code;
Nor sullen Heresy its whisperings crude
Fling o'er the stillness of Thy star-lit road.

Each symbol of Thy presence, Lord, is dear;
The consecrated vase, the goodly vest;
The Altar, where Thy Spirit comes so near;
The Tabernacle, where Thou deign'st to rest.

But chiefly dear, because to Thee most nigh,
Thy Priests and Levites, princes of Thy choice,
And they who at Thy Board their service ply,
And they who lift in choir their gladsome voice;

By reverent gesture, or by staid salute,
Their faith they witness, or their fealty prove;
And yield in studious form, by acts minute,
The thoughtful homage of punctilious love.

And Thou, who count'st the numbers of the sand,
And track'st the sparrow as it falls to earth,
Shalt note, and recompense with bounteous hand,
Each least and lowest deed of Christian worth.

THE WINTER QUARTER.

Advent.

THE TWO ADVENTS.



Mercy and Truth have met each other : Justice and Peace
have kissed. *Ps. lxxxiv. 11.*

SWEET Advent ! Twilight of our year,
Sure token that the Sun is near ;
When darkness melts into a light
So softly warm, so calmly bright ;

With threats of doom to sinners sad,
Commingling Alleluias glad ;
Thus shadowing Lent's austerer day,
Ere Paschal tones have died away.

Thou dost unfold the gracious word
In Holy Church's keeping stor'd,
Which Gabriel did, in early spring,
To God's predestined Mother bring.

And now that all is duly done,
And Mary's course hath well nigh run,

Dost spread the glorious page anew,
And set its theme in full review :

How GOD did to His creatures bend,
And into Mary's womb descend ;
That He might be our Brother, we
The sharers of His Deity.

But Advent hath its double sense,
Its strain of joy and penitence ;
Since He, who once in mercy came,
Shall come to wrap this world in flame.

Then shall the dead awake, and all
Be gathered at the Judge's call ;
And He the nations shall divide,
Like sheep and goats, on either side.

And He shall say, ' Come, all ye blest,
Heirs of My kingdom, to your rest ;'
But to the curst, ' Depart, and go
Into the place of endless woe.'

Judgment and mercy haunt our gates ;
But Mercy knocks, while Judgment waits ;

Full eighteen hundred years, and more,
Have fail'd to drain Love's bounteous store.

If like Thy love Thy judgments be,
Where, Lord, were sinners frail as we?
O loving Judge, O Saviour just,
Remember that we are but dust!

O, spare us yet a little space,
To profit by this Day of Grace;
Draw us by love, by mercy win,
Ere judgment come, and wrath begin!

The Feast of the Immaculate Conception.

THE PATRONESS OF THE TWO ADVENTS.



THY peerless privilege, O Mother-Maid,
In earliest lessons of our year hath part,
Telling how Faith's foundations deep are laid
In spotless innocence of mind and heart.

When CHRIST is nigh for mercy, or in fear,
His twofold Advent draws its light from thee,
O Virgin Mother of our Saviour dear,
O Mother of our Judge that is to be !

The grace that from thy chaste Conception flows
To awe and keen compunction well may move ;
So high the Nature that th' Incarnate chose,
So pure the Creature that deserv'd His love.

Yet, when our breaches of His perfect law,
Sham'd by the brightness of thy life, appal ;
We so disfigur'd, Thou without the flaw
That cleaves to us, poor children of the Fall.

Thy Mother's name, so sweet, and full of power,
Sheds o'er the sinner's night its gleam of hope,
That thou, the guardian of Christ's natal hour,
Wilt turn from us His judgment's fearful scope.

But woe to them, that in thy mercy trace
Deceitful hues of peace that ne'er shall come ;
And in the sorrowing sinner's pledge of grace
Forget the harden'd sinner's threat of doom.

Prize we the merits of our Virgin Queen,
The store of her Annunciation Feast,
Her lowliness and calm submission, seen
In shrinking converse with her Angel-Guest ;

Prize we the charity, that bade her share
With meek Elizabeth the saving news ;
Prize we her griefs, and on her glories rare
In duteous love and lowly reverence muse ;

But, would we know the secret of her might,
Whence every grace its grand proportions drew,
The golden urn, whence flow'd the tide of light,
That o'er her life such matchless radiance threw ?

'Tis from the mystery we hail to-day
Her glory issues, as her merits date ;
We sum her panegyric, when we say
‘ Mother of God, conceiv’d immaculate !’

What truths are lock’d within that ample phrase !
What funds of virtue, and what depths of power !
A life of peaceful love and ceaseless praise,
And years of merit centred in each hour.

No stain of earth her sacrifice to mar,
No fault or flaw its beauty to impair ;
The Spirit’s life without the Flesh’s war,
Each word an oracle, each thought a prayer.

Bend, O ye Angels, o’er the gracious sight ;
Return abash’d, ye sinners, from the view,
Humbled, yet thankful, that a Queen so bright
Should yearn with all a Mother’s heart o’er you.

Yet, while ye claim her sweet indulgent aid,
Seek ye the grace her life to imitate ;
We cannot love the spotless Mother-Maid,
And love the sin which was her only hate.

Stella Matutina.



THE stars retire, when first the sun
His giant race essays to run ;
Those lamps that stud the arch of night
Wax pale before the fount of light.

One only star nor fades nor sleeps,
But still her twilight station keeps,
With eye undimm'd and beams unshorn ;
The bright, the peerless Star of Morn.

When Christmas first reveals its light,
The Church's firmament is dight ;
Her stars still pave the wintry sky,
A great and glorious galaxy ;

Martyrs and Virgins,* Pontiffs bold,†
And Doctors with their words of gold ;‡

* St. Bibiana.

† St. Ambrose.

‡ St. Peter Chrysologus.

Then comes a void, as, one by one,
The stars retreat before the Sun ;^o

Save that Apostle, whom his Lord
From chilling doubt to faith restor'd ;
Who now beside His Cradle pays
No tardy vows, no faltering praise.

But Mary all the while is there
In hymn, or antiphon, or prayer ;
Shedding o'er every page and line
A lustre, only not divine.

When Advent lessons first begin,
We muse on Mary clear of sin,
And in the Virgin's primal grace
The promise of the Mother trace :

And meet it were, and duteous, sure,
That Mother should from stain be pure ;
Who did, by high prerogative,
The Manhood to her Maker give.

* The Festivals of the Saints become rarer as Advent advances ; and there is none between December 18th and Christmas-Day, with the exception of that of St. Thomas the Apostle. The Feast of the 'Expectation' is noticed later. The Blessed Virgin, meanwhile, is commemorated throughout Advent in the Office of the Season.

For eight full days,* with reverence due,
We linger fondly o'er the view
Of her, on whom the Father's Eye
Dwelt with intent complacency ;

For, mirror'd in that glass, He saw,
Undimm'd by cloud, unspoil'd by flaw
(Albeit in creature's meek estate),
The Beauty of the Uncreate.

Years roll away—the Virgin pure
Is stablished, lo, in grace secure ;
Girlhood's soft bloom still gilds her brow,
But matron honours crown it now.†

'Mary in hope'—O Mother-Maid,
What thoughts thy wondering heart pervade !
But wait awhile, and God will ope
Visions, transcending e'en their scope.

Speed on, ye lagging moments, speed,
Till joy fulfill'd to hope succeed ;
And Mary's patient faith have won
God for our Saviour, and her Son.

* Octave of the Immaculate Conception.

† The Feast of the Expectation follows the Octave of the Immaculate Conception after two days' interval.

Christmas Eve.



Crastina, erit vobis salus. Office of the Day.

AND is it then so near,
Comes it indeed to-morrow?
This hope of Saint and Seer?
This cure of sin and sorrow?

Sweet Saviour, art Thou nigh,
So soon to be possess'd;
Light of each weary eye,
Balm of each aching breast?

From th' unbeginning age,
In GOD's decree forecast,
And trac'd along the page
Of th' ever-shifting Past;

Whose promis'd Birth prevail'd
To stay the wrath divine,
Which Adam's sin entail'd
On him and on his line;

Whom, when the world grew dark
With Evil's deadly war,
The Faithful Patriarch
Rejoic'd to greet from far ;

Whom David veil'd in song,
And great Isaias saw ;
And Saints descried among
The shadows of the Law ;

Whom Simeon learn'd to find
In meditation's store ;
For whom blest Anna pin'd,
That widow of fourscore.

To-morrow ! joyful word,
The earth shall see its God,
And Mercy's voice be heard
In every pure abode.

To-morrow shall the tongue
Of dumbness be untied ;
And tears, in anguish wrung
From broken hearts, be dried.

To-morrow shall the lame
Leap as the bounding hart ;
And Want forget its shame,
And Penance lose its smart ;

To-morrow shall the scales
Drop from the darken'd eyes,
And souls, enwrapp'd in veils
Of sin, to light arise.

To-morrow's joy shall wake
The seal'd and senseless ear ;
And stirring music make
In souls unus'd to hear.

Come then to Him, O, come,
Ye weary and distress'd ;
His easy yoke assume,
And He will give you rest.

So shall that morrow's Sun
Its endless radiance leave ;
A Day for aye to run,
A morn without an eve.

Christmas Day.

AN ECLOGUE.

— o —
Quem vidistis, pastores; dicite, annuntiate nobis, in terris quis apparuit? Natum vidimus, et choros angelorum collaudantes Dominum. *Antiphon for Christmas-Day.*

‘WHOM have ye seen, ye shepherds, say,
Who hath appear’d on earth?’

‘A Child is born to you to-day,
And ’tis a gracious Birth.

‘We saw the Angel host on high,
In robes of light array’d;
The glory of the Lord came nigh,
And we were sore afraid.

‘And then we heard an Angel say
This sweetly soothing word:
Fear not, I bring you joy to-day;
A Saviour CHRIST the LORD

‘Is born to you and to all lands,
As hereby ye may know;
Go seek a Babe in swathing-bands,
Laid in a manger low.

‘ Then, as the Angel’s voice did cease,
Forth rang the heavenly choir :
“ Glory to GOD, on earth be peace
To men of pure desire.”

‘ And you, ye Pastors of the Lord,
What have *ye* witness’d, say ;
Have ye not welcom’d and ador’d
Your Saviour, born to-day ?

‘ As meek and mild He deign’d to lie
Beneath your loving eyes ;
Shrouding His awful Deity
In Sacramental guise ?

‘ What though no glory shine above,
Nor Angel’s voice be heard ?
The Church, our Messenger of love,
Proclaims th’ Incarnate WORD ;

‘ While altars beam with tribute light,
And countless choirs reply,
In words first taught by Heaven to-night,
“ Glory to GOD on high.”

' Alike in church and mission-room
Our new-born King we greet ;
'Neath rustic roof and sculptur'd dome
We kiss His sacred Feet.

' If 'mid palatial pomp we raise
Our sweet-voic'd minstrelsie ;
The nobler then our work of praise,
The worthier, Lord, of Thee.

' If 'mid the notes of poverty—
Faith's child-like eye in them
Thy Birth in semblance may descry,
A second Bethlehem.'

Christmas Day.

THE TRIPLE MASS.



' DROP down, ye genial heavens, your dewy shower,
Dissolve, ye clouds, into a gushing rain,
Bud forth, thou earth, Salvation's beauteous Flower ;'
So spake the Church in calm imploring strain

Day after day. And now her cry is heard,
And, 'mid the solemn stillness of the night,
Descends, O Father, Thine Almighty WORD
Forth from the realms of His imperial might.*

Bride of the Lamb ! put on thy strength, arise,
Thy vests of joy, thy gifts of grace prepare ;
An ampler tide of grateful Sacrifice,
A sweeter incense of prevailing prayer.

'Tis done. The Bride goes forth to meet her Spouse,
And spreads her festive board, and dons her best ;
With special rights her faithful Priests endows,
To greet with worthier love her Royal Guest.

* Dum medium silentium tenerent omnia, et nox in suo cursu
medium iter perageret, Omnipotens Sermo Tuus a regalibus sedibus
venit. *Antiphon for Sunday after Christmas.*

Thrice shall the Victim, Sov'reign Lord, to Thee
Be immolated at each holy shrine ;
In homage to the Ever-Blessed THREE,
Whose purpose issued in this work divine.

And while this triple Act of priceless worth
Pleads for the grant of Thine effectual grace ;
Its slow unwinding gives to men on earth
The various epochs of Thy plan to trace.*

(Like angels, who the Face of GOD behold,
And at His Throne their duteous homage plight,
Yet bear their high commission to unfold
His deep economies to mortal sight ;

Or like the stars that pave the firmament,
And chant their joyous lauds from age to age ;
Yet turn on us their lustre, and present
The various wonders of their jewell'd page :)

* The three Masses of Christmas Day, regarded on what may be called their human side, set before us the Nativity under the different aspects of prophecy, narrative, and dogma ; and may thus be considered to represent the Mystery in the three stages of its historical progress.

At midnight's hour,* prophetic mists still hang
Around the glories of Messiah's Birth,
Which David hinted, ere the welkin rang
With the glad notes of holy angel mirth.

At dawn,† the shepherds tell with meek surprise
How Heaven enwrapp'd them in its light benign,
And how they sped to feast their wondering eyes
On Mary, Joseph, and the Babe Divine.

But, when the Day‡ hath come, Saint Paul shall
preach
Of Him in whom the Father's brightness shone ;
And Holy Church the WORD INCARNATE teach
In the clear accents of the lov'd Saint John :

Fall we on bended knee, and Him adore,
Nor own His present Deity the less,
Since veil'd in Infant form ; but all the more
His Might revere, because we love His lowliness.

* Midnight Mass (Introit).

† Aurora Mass.

‡ Mass of the Day.

St. John the Evangelist.

DECEMBER 27.

CHRISTMAS, they say, is Love's own Feast ;
Then sure 'twere meet that he
Who found his home on JESUS' breast
Should near His cradle be.

With martyrs meek, and humble souls,
The true and clean of heart,
The Church in Mary's band enrols
Her Virgin counterpart.

With her from earliest years he trod
The path of peace secure ;
And earn'd the promis'd boon of God,
The blessings of the pure ;

Calm Faith, that walks as 'twere by sight,
And Love's interior sense ;
High Wisdom, and the vision bright
That beams on innocence.

To him on Patmos' isle 'twas given
To drink with eagle eye
Deep draughts of light, replete with Heaven,
Imparted from on high ;

To learn the virgins' mystic song,
And scan the saints' abode ;
And look with prescient gaze along
The Church's destin'd road.

Love was this lov'd Disciple's theme,
Which gilds his every page ;
His food by day, by night his dream,
His eloquence in age ;

His children fear'd that changeless strain
Might dull and weary prove ;
He sweetly smil'd, and said again,
' Love ye each other, love.'*

* 'Blessed John the Evangelist, when tarrying at Ephesus in extreme old age, and when he could with difficulty be carried to the church by his disciples, and could but imperfectly articulate his words, used to say nothing at their different gatherings except "Little children, love one another." At length his disciples and brethren who were present, wearied with the constant repetition of the same words, said to him : "Master, wherefore dost thou always say the same things?" who answered, in words worthy of St. John, "Because it is our Lord's precept, and suffices of itself." ' *Office of St. John the Evangelist, Lesson vi.*

O well-belov'd and loving one !
We hail thee for our brother ;
For thou art Mary's foster-son,
And Mary is our Mother :

Brother ! may that dear title move
Thy charity to plead,
That we may love, as thou dost love,
In truth and very deed.

The Martyrs of the Nativity.

SCARCE have the echoes of our Christmas song
Died on the listening Church's raptur'd ear,
Ere notes of coming strife are heard among
The joyous accents of the closing year ;
Telling how CHRIST is born to pain and loss,
And how the cradle bodes the shadow of the Cross.

Saint Stephen leads the glorious Martyrs' band,
Who, ere the fifth day's sun have duly set,
With aureole on head, and palm in hand,
Around the Crib in solemn state have met ;
These all for CHRIST's true faith have bled or
warr'd,
And now their Infant King most loyally do guard.

Saint John is next. He fought, but not to blood,
And earn'd our Lady's peaceful martyrdom ;
For he with her beneath the Cross had stood,
And shar'd her honours, as she shar'd his home :

So CHRIST restrain'd the torments' fury, lest
The burning stream should do the tyrant's stern
behest.

But who are these that swell the white-rob'd
choir ?

These who their Lord with mute confession
own'd ;*

Martyrs in act, but children in desire ;

Prov'd without conflict, without warfare crown'd.

Their strange unwonted bliss they smile to see,

'And clasp their palms and coronets with simple
glee.'†

Last comes a Pontiff, dear to Britain's isle,

'Pleasing to God, and just in trial found ;'‡

Who erst, in Canterbury's stately pile,

Purpled with blood the consecrated ground ;

For he rever'd the Church's mighty laws,

And counted death a gain, so he might win her
cause.

* Non loquendo, sed moriendo, confessi sunt.

Collect for the Feast of the Holy Innocents.

†

Aram sub ipsam simplices

Palma et coronis luditis.

Hymn for the Holy Innocents' Day.

‡ Office of a Confessor Bishop.

Such solemn truths, and awful memories,
Float round Thy Cradle, Lord, and mark Thy
Birth ;
Lest men should feign Thou cam'st Thyself to
please,
Or purchase for Thy sons a crown of earth ;
And, 'mid the tokens of Thy love, forget
That, as a flint, Thy Face tow'rds shame and grief
was set.*

* Is. L. 7.

New Year's Eve.

(MIDNIGHT.)

THE UNCHANGING AMID THE PERISHABLE.

Thou art the Self-same, and Thy years shall not fall. *Heb. i. 12.*
Office of the Circumcision.

HARK the bells so blithely ringing
From each distant urban tower ;
Wide their joyous message flinging
O'er the calm of midnight's hour.

Fast and faster seem they crying
With impetuous eager speech,
While the moments quick are flying
Further than their voice can reach.

Suddenly the midnight warning,
Stricken on the listener's ear,
Signals in the anxious morning
Of the coming untried year.

E

Heard beside it, grates the jingling
Of each pert intrusive bell ;
Like some wild carousal mingling
With a deep sepulchral knell.

Silly world ! why stand'st thou trifling
At a solemn hour like this ;
Notes of holier music stifling
With the thoughts of fancied bliss ?

Are thy memories so cheering,
Are thy dreams so sweet and pure,
Are thy prospects so endearing,
Is thy standing-ground so sure,

Are thy hopes of heaven so certain,
Is thy doom so void of fear,
That thou laughest as the curtain
Drops upon each dying year ?

Ah ! to me it seems a folly
Thus with festal glee to break
On the deep'ning melancholy
Of the year's funereal wake.

Other thoughts than thoughts of gladness
Haunt me on each year's decline :
Pangs of loss, and dreams of sadness,
(Might a Christian dare repine) ;

Friends of old, or dead, or dying,
Whelm'd in Time's remorseless wave ;
Youth decaying, Manhood hieing
To the border of the grave ;

Holy Childhood's bloom delicious
Blanch'd by care and sadness now ;
And the miser's scowl suspicious,
Where was Boyhood's beaming brow ;

Worse than all, the shame within us
For our sins' increasing score ;
Calls, in mercy sent to win us,
Pil'd afresh in Penance' store.

One alone there is unchanging
In this changeful retrospect ;
All controlling, all arranging,
For the good of His Elect.

God shall scan the tablet chequer'd
Of each unreturning year,
And of good or ill the record
Note in Heaven's own register.

Thanks to Him whose love unfailing
Pleads through Mercy's open gate,
And our souls, if sick or ailing,
Hastes in-grace to reinstate ;

Drooping courage re-enforces ;
Stirs our languid hearts anew ;
And our life's successive courses
Deigns with flowers of hope to strew.

Feast of the Epiphany.

JANUARY 6.

WITH step so gentle, Lord,
Thou cam'st of late on earth,
That, while our grateful hearts ador'd
The tokens of Thy Birth,
Our feeble eyes too sluggish were to trace
Thy notes of power and lineaments of Royal grace.

Such deep simplicity
Hung o'er Thy chosen lot,
As in the crib Thou deign'dst to lie,
Our laggard faith forgot
That with Thy lowly love Thou dost unite
The Strength of GOD, the Wisdom of the Infinite.

But, while our musings stay
Chain'd to Thy narrow bed,
Sages and Kings are on their way,
Star-guided, to Thy shed ;

The great of earth their Heavenly King to meet,
The wise of earth to lay their folly at His feet.

With adoration low
The royal liegemen own'd
Their Sovereign, in His Beauty now
On Mary's lap enthron'd ;
Type of the Church, His earthly resting-place,
Whence still He deals around His largesses of grace.

And these three princes too,
Who did their offerings bring,
Are patrons blest and emblems true
Of many a Christian King ;
As Louis, bold of arm, but pure of heart,
Or Edward, who in plenty chose the pilgrim's part.

The Church at eve to-day
Is liken'd in mine eye
To where her Lord in silence lay,
That first Epiphany ;
As, couch'd in meekness on His earthly throne,*
He scatters o'er His realm His Royal benison.

* The Benediction of the Most Holy Sacrament on the Evening
of the Feast of the Epiphany.

Bring to His earthly shrine,
And proffer at His Feet,
The gold of Charity divine,
And Worship's incense sweet ;
With purest myrrh of Penance, strong to save
Our souls from noxious taint, in Sin's consuming
grave.

Feast of the Most Holy Name of Jesus.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY.



'WHAT'S in a name?' the shallow worldling cries ;
'Treasures of love,' the truthful heart replies ;
For Nature wills it that a name should be
Our life's memorial in epitome.

When absence wears, or death's convulsion rends
The chain of sense, that couples friends with friends,
What voice can plead Affection's wavering claim,
And wake its slumbering energies ? A name.

What word so soothing to a mother's ear,
What sign of promise to her heart so dear,
As that fond title to her darling given
In the blest Rite which pledg'd its soul to Heaven ?

When Magdalen her Risen Lord descried,
But dared not hope HIMSELF was at her side,
What breath evok'd her love's impatient flame ?
He breath'd her name—and 'twas His Mother's
name.

Then marvel not if Holy Church enshrine
 Kind Nature's promptings in her code divine ;
 Nature—His work who fram'd the world of Grace—
 Which Sin hath marr'd, but could not all deface.

What mighty lessons, what o'ermastering aims,
 Couch in Thine inmost depths, O Name of names !
 Which, hid from souls enslav'd by error's bond,
 Spring at the touch of Faith's creative wand.

O Name of awe, to listening Angels dear,
 Which vanquish'd demons flee with howling fear ;
 And scoffers, used to sport with words in vain,
 Start as they hear, and pause ere they profane.

O Name of sweetness ! Love's compendious plea,
 What grace of eloquence is stored in thee !
 What client's suit hath JESUS e'er withstood
 Who call'd Him Saviour, and invok'd His Blood ?

From heart to lip may that sweet Name arise,
 If sorrow crush me, or if sin surprise ;
 Till with my latest breath its notes expire,
 To wake, unending, in the heavenly choir !

Feast of the Espousals of our Lady and St. Joseph.

JANUARY 23.



THE works of GOD before the Fall
Were by Himself survey'd, and all
Pronounc'd exceeding good ;
No wound their awful beauty scarr'd,
No devious line of error marr'd
Their faultless rectitude.

At length that glorious world by sin,
Which Eve's consent invited in,
Of half its grace was shorn ;
Sin swept the plains, sin stripp'd the bowers,
And e'en the rose, that queen of flowers,
Was cumber'd with the thorn.

Yea, e'en that fairest brightest gem
In Nature's primal diadem,
The Holy Marriage State,
By sin's polluting touch was soil'd,
And of its pristine lustre spoil'd,
Through Satan's envious hate.

'Twas Mary's mission to retrieve
 The ruin of our race in Eve ;
 To her in chief 'twas given,
 That damag'd law to re-instate,
 And from misuse to vindicate
 So choice a boon of Heaven.

For she by special gift was freed
 From penalties of Adam's seed,
 The first-fruits of the Fall ;
 Secur'd by grace from inborn stain,
 In her alone was snapp'd the chain
 Of Sin Original.

Meet witness to the golden Rule
 (First taught in CHRIST's ascetic school)
 Of heavenward Chastity ;
 Which e'en on Marriage sheds a light,
 And serves, in withering sin's despite,
 Its ends to sanctify.

Nor yet to type and doubtful hint
 Did GOD His glorious message stint,
 But dealt His truth around ;

His love ordain'd by high decree
That Mary should with Joseph be
In virgin wedlock bound.

O, what a glorious sight was there,
As, each to each, that matchless Pair
Plighted their nuptial vows !
Of maidens pure the purest she,
Of Adam's sons the worthiest he
To win so blest a Spouse.

The very Angels stoop'd to gaze,
And watch'd in joy and calm amaze
That work of sovereign grace ;
Rejoicing that one favour'd spot
Had 'scap'd the all-consuming blot
That mars Creation's face.

Each year the Church her children true
These chaste Espousals bids review,
And cull their lessons sweet ;
That while o'er history's page they roam,
One sinless bond, one spotless home,
Their wearied eye may meet.

Nor let such virtue's arduous claims
Or scare our sight or daunt our aims ;
E'en Failure's self may teach :
Though humbled, we may yet admire ;
Though baffled, still in faith aspire
To heights we may not reach.

Who nothing dares shall nothing gain ;
E'en they who tempt the boundless main
Must step by step begin ;
And he may Satan's work undo,
And Eden's bliss in part renew,
Who weeds his way of sin.

Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

FEBRUARY 2.



And she was a widow until fourscore and four years; who departed not from the Temple, by fastings and prayers serving night and day. *St. Luke* ii. 37.

THOU art the widow's GOD, Almighty Lord;
Ah! knew they but their gain, thrice happy they
Who in Thy Kingdom all their treasure hoard,
And seek Thee in Thy Church by night and day!
Who wait shall win; who listen long shall hear
Thy voice in mercy speak, and feel Thy Presence
near.

For years and years, prone on the Temple floor,
Blest Anna spent her widowhood of hope;
Unus'd, albeit expert in holy lore,
To scan too close her meditation's scope;
Content to woo in faith the Star of Day,
And of its shining leave to GOD the time and way.

With ceaseless zeal she plied her daily task,
Fearing by sin to spoil, or sloth to miss,
The boon she dar'd to hope, yet dar'd not ask—

Some word of comfort, or some sight of bliss ;
And GOD did of His grace her suit accord,
So long she watch'd and wak'd, so lovingly ador'd.

One morning brought her to her work of praise ;
No sign from Heaven that morning's import told ;
The sun rose blithely as on other days ;
Men walk'd and talk'd their wont, and bought
and sold ;
E'en Anna's step was measur'd, as of yore ;
She came that day, as she had come so oft before.

Then on her eye a wondrous vision beam'd ;
A man of meek aspect, a Matron mild
(If matron might be thought who maiden seem'd),
And in her arms a bright and glorious Child ;
Anon they pause, and near the portal stay ;
Then tow'rd the altar wend their calm and pensive
way.

Why had they halted near the Temple door ?
A suppliant's voice their precious Charge had
claim'd ;
A venerable Saint, decrepit, hoar,
With GOD instinct, and holy love inflam'd,

Had clasp'd the Child, and his Creator bless'd,
Who gave him such a vision ere he sank to rest.

Still in the circles of revolving Time
Lights of the past recur, unspoil'd by change ;
The Saints who graced the Gospel's early prime
Still shine within the New Creation's range ;
Their home the Church, the Mass their daily
Food,
And GOD their Friend in need, their All in solitude.

So have I mark'd—a sight to Angels fair—
Some aged daughter of Green Erin's isle
(Erin, dear land of patient faith and prayer !)
Her station keep within some sacred pile ;
I wist not of her secret, yet I ween
GOD's whisperings she had heard, and heavenly
glimpses seen.

One day I miss'd her from th' accustom'd nook ;
The church without her seem'd another place ;
A leaf was torn from out a well-stor'd book ;
A table lack'd some old familiar face :
Yet no ; she had but mov'd within the screen
That hides from human eye the glorious Church
unseen.

The joys which flash'd on holy Simeon's view,
To Christian priests and flocks of right belong ;
The psalm, which from his lips those transports
 drew,
Lends its sweet music to our evening song ;
The light which dawn'd on him so floods our way,
That we can chant our *Nunc dimittis* every day.*

* The *Nunc dimittis* forms part of the daily office of Complin.

Ash Wednesday.

THE BLESSING AND IMPOSITION OF THE ASHES.



THE priest is clad, the altar set,
The worshippers have duly met ;
But sinners, ere the rite begin,
Must bow their heads in shame for sin.

With solemn acts, and holy prayers,
Their feast of tears the Church prepares ;
And gifts the brute and barren earth
With all but Sacramental worth.

Come then, ye meek and mourning trains,
And let the penitential grains
With humbling thoughts your hearts amend,
As at the altar-rails ye bend ;

Those rails where oft in faith ye knelt,
And GOD's good Presence saw and felt,
Where, as at Angel's bidding given,
Dropp'd on your tongues the Bread from heaven.

Who fain would joy must sorrow too,
Who hope for grace must penance do ;
Nor shun the Cross's present pain
Who court the Saints' immortal gain.

Hark, as, with silent step and slow,
The priest moves gently to and fro,
The calm Memento's note of fear
Bounds, like a knell, from ear to ear :

' Remember, mortal, thou art dust,'
Nor dare in gauds of earth to trust ;
Thy days to swift destruction tend,
Thine origin bespeaks thine end.

Thy life, with misery so fraught,
In nought begins, and ends in nought ;
The dust which form'd thee does but pave
The floor of thy half-open'd grave.

Remember, ere thy sun have set,
Lest, shouldst thou still thy peace forget,
Its forfeit joys be brought to mind
When Penance' plank is left behind.

Repent, and still in comfort here
Thy bruised heart His Voice shall cheer,
And His sweet Eucharistic Gift
Thine earth-born body still uplift.

So we but nurse that Living Seed,
This dust shall rise to life indeed ;
Who loves shall smile on earth's annoy ;
' Who sows in tears shall reap in joy.'

THE SPRING QUARTER.

The First Sunday in Lent.

Angelis suis Deus mandavit de te, ut custodiant te in omnibus viis tuis. *Office for Lent.*

LORD, when the Forty Days were past
Of Thine austere self-chosen Fast,
Thou didst Thy rest forego ;
Angels were waiting on Thy beck,
But Thou their eager zeal didst check,
Till Thou hadst quell'd the Foe.

Ah, Lord, what grief for Thee to abide
Those hours of moments by his side
And run Temptation's course ;
By keen though faultless sense to know
What streams of living death there flow
From sin's polluted source !

To hear Thy sacred Truth belied,
And e'en Thy Scriptures travestied
(His masterpiece of craft) !
What though his arts were met and foil'd,
And from Thy mailèd Soil recoil'd
Each blunted, baffled shaft ?

Yet didst Thou give that Tempter-Foe
To sway Thy Footsteps to and fro
 With fierce but fruitless power,
With rude caprice to plant Thee now
On the high mountain's dizzy brow,
 Now on the Temple-tower.

And not till Thou hadst vanquish'd sin,
Did Angel ministries begin
 Their solace to prepare ;
When Satan left Thee, then they sped
Their banquet of delights to spread
 With reverential care.

Those loving words, ' GOD giveth Thee
The charge of Angel-guards to be,'
 Are still our heritage ;
Mingled with truths of darker hue,
Like rose-buds twin'd with leaves of yew,
 They grace the Church's page.

Our fasts are feasts, our burdens ease,
And light as air our penances ;
 Yet Thou our course dost cheer,

With soothing voice, and guiding star,
And words of promise, fitter far
For ancient days severe.

Lord, wilt Thou deign accept a Lent
Of love, and prayer, and pure intent,
In worthier penance' stead ?
Our feeble frames, our corporal ills,
That clog the plumage of our wills,
For mercy's judgment plead.

Mid-Lent Sunday.



Lætare, &c. Introit for Mid-Lent Sunday.

WHAT ! words of joy so soon,
With penance scarce begun ?
As yet one lagging Lenten moon
Its course hath barely run ;
And Holy Church with kind maternal voice
Our weary spirits cheers, and bids us e'en rejoice.

GOD wills no sinner's death,
And tempers e'en his pain ;
The sword long slumbers in its sheath,
Nor wounds but for our gain ;
And ere it pierce us through, some mandate stays
The avenging hand, and still the stroke in hope de-
lays.

O cursed weight of sin,
That checks the onward flow
Of love without and joy within,
And steeps the earth in woe,

Unknown where thoughts of pride, or deeds of ill,
Nor mar nor fret the course of GOD's all-gladd'ning
will.

Wouldst thou with sin compare
Love's unembarrass'd power ?
Look at the birds that skim the air,
Or scan the beauteous flower ;
Fragments of Eden, which bespeak a world
Once 'very good'—but since by sin to ruin hurl'd.

And e'en on hearts that wake
From sinful dreams to life,
Flashes of joy and comfort break
'Mid Penance' saving strife ;
And perfum'd gales from Easter's nearing shore
Breathe the pure foretaste of their rich exhaustless
store.

But words which solace bring
To meek and suffering souls,
On sinners unrepentant fling
Vengeance in fiery coals ;
One's banquet is another's bane—the bell
Which peals the victor's glory tolls the captive's
knell.

Nor Easter's bright repose,
Nor Mid-Lent's grateful pause,
Gives joy or sweet relief to those
Who slight the Church's laws ;
When Easter comes, they need a second Lent,
Their squander'd gifts to mourn—their penance to
repent.

The Feast of St. Joseph.

MARCH 19.



**DEAREST of Saints, since nearest, Lord, to Thee,
Are they who shar'd on earth Thy Home and
Heart ;**

**The firstlings of Thy flock—Thy family—
Who in Thy works and ways bore chiefest part.**

**The Baptist, who foreshow'd Thee, and confess'd ;
And great Apostles, gain'd by Thee to GOD ;
As he who lean'd at Supper on Thy Breast,
And he on whom was laid the Church's load.**

**But one there was who of all Saints alone
Claimed in Thy Heart a deeper, holier share,
And call'd Thee, as none else could call, her Own ;
The Mother of Thy choice and of Thy care.**

**And next to her, in office as in grace,
Her Spouse, of love so gentle and so large ;
Who cherish'd her, and held a father's place
Tow'rds Him whom GOD had given to both in
charge.**

Who took Him when an Infant in his arms,
And fondled Him as doting parents use ;
And talk'd to Mary of His winning charms,
And on His grand perfections joy'd to muse.

And He, who compass'd all, and needed nought,
His creatures' care with grateful love repaid ;
With meek attention listen'd when they taught ;
With prompt obedience practis'd what they bade.

And, since He came on earth for sinners' sake,
Though every good He own'd, and all things knew,
Yet deign'd He, in our poor regard, to make
As though in wisdom and in grace He grew.*

O Thou that bridgest o'er the gulph of space,
Nearing the past, and shaping the unseen,
Gifting the laggard soul's dull eye to trace
In vivid hue the scenes that once have been ;

Bear me in spirit to that blest Abode,
Whose cloister'd rule no Gospel hath reveal'd,
Within whose fastness our Incarnate GOD
For thrice ten years His rightful claims conceal'd ;

* St. Luke ii. 52.

And follow out each fertile hint of Truth,
That Holy Writ hath veil'd in luring shade ;
The deep subjection of His duteous Youth ;*
His patient service at a lowly trade :†

Bring home to thought each day's unchanging round ;
The social prayer, sweet labour, meek repast ;
The gentle words, and colloquies profound,
Whose drift the shadows of the Cross forecast !

And of that Hidden Life, great Patriarch !
Who, save His Mother, priz'd the worth like thee ;
With sight-like faith the tokens wont to mark
Of Light, and faintly shrouded Deity ?

Nor fail'd thy loyal love to meet its due ;
With GOD on earth long privileged to bide,
Then sink to rest, with heavenly joys in view,
And JESUS and His Mother at thy side.

The Passion's bitter day thou didst not see,
Snatch'd from its gloom within the gate of Life,
To hear that Death was merg'd in Victory,
Ere thou hadst felt its sting or shar'd its strife.

* St. Luke ii. 51.

† St. Mark vi. 3.

Patron and Pattern of the Happy Death !

**When GOD at length shall bid me to resign
The life He gave me, may I yield my breath
Into His hands with joy and peace like thine !**

The Feast of St. Benedict.

MARCH 21.

THE TWOFOLD IMMORTALITY OF THE SAINTS.



Beati mites, quoniam ipsi possidebunt terram. S. Matt. v. 4.

**GREAT Father of a saintly line !
The glories of thy work divine
From age to age endure ;
They spring through death to second birth,
And life perennial e'en on earth
In spite of earth secure :**

**For while, in realms of heavenly light,
Thou payest to the Infinite
Thy court of ceaseless praise,
Thy children, doom'd to exile, still
With loyal hearts or work thy will
Or stereotype thy ways ;**

**For full twelve centuries and more
Drawing on that exhaustless store
Of holiness and truth ;**

While thrones have fall'n, and empires past,
Weaving those crowns of grace that last
In undecaying youth.

Where are *thine* idols, vaunting World ?
To dark oblivion's chambers hurl'd,
Or scorn'd on History's page ;
Where are *thy* names that never die ?
Thy boasted immortality
Oft blooms but for an age !

And e'en those names that longest live,
How feebly shines the light they give
With saintly fame compar'd !
Who does one deed of virtue more
For love of them that from of yore
The worldling's praise have shar'd ?

But saintly life—ah ! 'tis a flower
Of bloom unchang'd, a word of power,
An antidote to sin ;
It dazzleth man's, nay, angel's eye,
The seeds of glory to descry
That couch its depths within.

Not to the boastful, but the meek,
Who first their Master's kingdom seek,
Is earth's dominion given ;
They gain two crowns who one refuse,
And win the very world they lose
In quest of GOD and Heaven.

The Feast of the Annunciation.

MARCH 25.

YE who deem us over-bold
When we chant our Lady's praise—
Judges harsh and critics cold
Of each high and ardent phrase—
Come with me, and con the story
Of her grace and destin'd glory ;
By its light ye stand reprov'd ;
Dare we slight whom GOD so lov'd ?

Who is this, whose feet are shod
With the Gospel's preparation,
Bright Ambassador of GOD,
Earliest herald of Salvation ?
With some great commission laden
Speeds he to the holy Maiden,
Call'd by Christ from aye to bear
In His work a Mother's share.

Though so high and holy he,
Mark how reverently he meets her :
Though so meek and lowly she,
Hear how loyally he greets her !
Ne'er was queen so gently treated ;
Ne'er was Saint so nobly greeted :
' Hail, O Virgin ! full of grace,
Blessed one of woman's race.'

Full of grace, and overflowing,
E'en in girlhood's tender age ;
All her care on GOD bestowing,
So she might His love engage ;
All the day, and every day,
In His Presence wont to stay ;
Still her soul in brightness keeping,
Still by grace new merit reaping.

In her speech what wisdom shows !
Wisdom meet for hoary years ;
In her gait what grand repose !
What discretion in her fears !
With the end of her vocation,
By a beauteous adaptation,
Every grace that in her shines,
Fitly, wondrously combines.

H

Man's redemption hung suspended
On that Maiden's meek consent ;
Satan's direful reign was ended
When she breath'd her fix'd intent :
' Lo ! the handmaid of the Lord !
Be it done as saith Thy word ;'
When her Fiat once was spoken,
Then the bonds of sin were broken.

Dearest Lord, and can it be
That Thy Mother's claims and Thine
Clash in jarring rivalry ?
No ! they meet and intertwine ;
For 'twas Thou who didst create her ;
Thou who didst in grace instate her ;
That in her the world might see
One supremely fit for Thee.

Passion Sunday.

THE VEILING OF THE PICTURES AND IMAGES.



THE gleam of joy that dawn'd last week
On sin's review, so blank and bleak,
Was but the sun's retiring glance
Shot on the dreary world's expanse,
Just ere his glowing orb he shroud
Beneath a sable pall of cloud.

Rise on my soul, perennial Light ;
Thou art not quench'd, but hid from sight ;
Thou hast but vanish'd for a space ;
Thou wilt Thy rearward steps retrace ;
Thou treadest, Lord, Thy walk of sorrow,
To rise resplendent on the morrow.

Our pictures drap'd, in mourning guise,
Thy darken'd lustre symbolise ;
And envious veils for once deny
Thine Image to the longing eye ;
Truth's self must every shadow chase,
Art fails to teach, and forms give place.

Away with sign and semblance now !
None can express Thyself but Thou :
Ye Saints, your 'minish'd honours hide,
Withdraw before the Crucified ;
Nor let the bounds of sense control
The vision of the ranging soul.

O suffering Saviour ! fill my heart ;
Sin was Thy Passion's fiercest smart ;
'Twas not the cruel Jews, but we
Who heap'd Thy chiefest woes on Thee ;
Our pride—our waste of grace—'twas this
Which stung Thy soul like Judas' kiss.

More, more to Thee than scourge or nail
Was that far-stretching deathful tale
Of human sin, in Eve begun,
And to the Day of Doom to run,
That, in the sad Gethsemani,
Rose to Thy Mind's affrighted Eye.

Of sins completed and forecast
The grim procession came and pass'd :
The sins that mov'd Jehovah's ire,
The sins that fed Gomorra's fire,

The sins that perish'd in the Flood,
The sins that shed Thy sacred Blood ;
Nor least, nor lowest in the line,
Thy sins, poor child of GOD, and mine.

The Feast of the Seven Dolours.

FRIDAY IN PASSION WEEK.

Behold thy Mother! *St. John xix. 27.*

CALL'D to my dying Saviour's Feet,
What Patron of His Cross so meet
As thou, whom thence He deign'd to greet?
My Mother!

Sorrow with sorrow loves to dwell,
Mourners their tale to mourners tell;
Who loves the Cross should love thee well,
My Mother!

Who loves the Cross from sin will flee,
And seek on Calvary to be
With Magdalen, and John, and thee,
My Mother!

How couldst thou see thy Son Divine
His Head in agony incline?
Was ever anguish like to thine,
My Mother!

How couldst thou hear in patient mood
The fierce and frantic multitude
Fling on His ear its tauntings rude,
My Mother!

And think how once thine arms around
His infant form in rapture wound,
When all thy hopes with bliss were crown'd,
My Mother!

Ah! couldst thou fain forget the Past,
Nor with its memories contrast
This woe—the worst, but not the last—
My Mother!

The Crib where first He drew His Breath,
The deep repose of Nazareth,
Oh! how unlike this bitter Death,
My Mother!

'Mid shifting scenes of hope and fear,
When joy is high, or pain is near,
'Tis thine to solace, thine to cheer,
My Mother!

But when our shatter'd spirits cower
In desolation's dreaded hour,
'Tis then thou chiefly show'st thy power,
My Mother!

Not from soft couch or gorgeous throne,
But from His bed of suffering lone,
Did JESUS give thee to His own,
My Mother!

When wave on wave of sorrow roll'd,
'Twas then our loving Lord consol'd
His mourning son, and said, 'Behold
Thy Mother!'

Palm Sunday.



WHAT sweetly solemn pomp is this,
Where joy and grief unite—
The suckling's praise and Judas' kiss
Blent in one common rite ?

The Church's range, to stranger's eye,
Shows like a forest now,
As priest and people lift on high
The consecrated bough.

Anon they move to measur'd strain
Of deep pathetic psalm,
In long procession, twain and twain,
Arm'd with the peaceful palm :

Not blithe, as when the fickle crowd
Strew'd branches on the way
Of Him, whom in their rage they vow'd
When next they met to slay :

For how should Holy Church be glad,
Who views with equal eye
The triumph and its issue sad,
So various, yet so nigh ?

We linger at the Temple gates
To chant Thy praises, Lord ;
For while we pause, the ' Historian'* waits,
Thy Passion to record.

Stand at your posts, ye faithful bands,
And mark the Gospel words ;
And as they sound, with trusty hands
Upraise your leafy swords.†

'Mid error's strife and war's alarms,
Prepare to do your part ;
Ye bear in hand the Martyr's arms,
Then nurse the Martyr's heart.

* The Deacon who chants the narrative part of the Passion in Holy Week is called the ' Historian' (Chronista).

† The palms are borne in the hand during the singing of the Gospel.

Holy Thursday.

THE CHRISTIAN PRIESTHOOD.



DRAW near, ye Christian Priests ;
This is your Feast of feasts,
Whence date the glories of your saintly line ;
When first the Incarnate GOD
Himself on men bestow'd ;
And laid on you to guard and give the Boon Divine.

One at the altar stands,
And lifts with holy hands
The Victim pure, so loving yet so dread ;
O dignity immense !
O joy surpassing sense !
He acts his Saviour's part, and offers in His stead.

His fellows at the Board
Have 'eaten, and ador'd ;'^{*}
Heirs of His charge, and partners of His gift ;
Albeit they must forbear
His privilege to share,
And muse in silence on their high vocation's drift.†

^{*} Manducaverunt et adoraverunt. Ps. xxi. 30.

† Only one Mass is celebrated in each church on Holy Thursday ;
and the Priests who do not celebrate communicate at it.

What hallowing thoughts arise !
What gracious memories
Flow from that Act, and float around its source !
As if the very place
Were redolent of grace,
Where JESUS first ordain'd and set His Priesthood's
course ;

Thoughts of that service sweet,
Which, bending at the feet
Of those He call'd His friends, Our Saviour paid ;
Thoughts on the favour spent,
With unreserv'd intent,
On him who shar'd the Feast, and then his Lord
betray'd.

Where graces most abound,
There sins are deepest found ;
With John's affection grew Iscariot's hate ;
The light which shines when used,
Is darkness when abus'd ;
The love which fires the Saint will steel the repro-
bate.

Holy Thursday.

THE CONSECRATION OF THE OILS.



OUR Lord is prodigal of gifts to-day,
His mercies with His steps harmonious move,
Or, if He pause, He pauses to display
New signs of power, new miracles of love.

Twice, ere the Rite of rites be yet complete,
Lo, where the mitred celebrant descends,
To bless with holy words, and actions meet,
The Oil of gladness to its destin'd ends !

And while each white-rob'd priest in order pays
Glad homage to the source of health divine,
Our grateful hearts shall echo forth the praise,
And in the Church's world-wide 'Ave' join.

Hail, holy Oil !* languor's all-soothing balm ;
Matter of that Last Sacrament, whence flow
The sweet relief and placid holy calm
That settle oft on sickness' anxious brow ;

* The Oil of the Sick.

At whose soft touch and merciful Avaunt
Death halts abash'd, and drops his ready arms ;
And Angels flock to guard their favour'd haunt
From Sin's approach, or Terror's vain alarms.

Hail, holy Oil !* which, ere baptismal streams
The cleaving taint of inborn guilt efface,
Pours on the heart the anticipative gleams
That pledge the sunshine of converting grace ;

Yet nam'd art thou in loftier ministries :
Strength of the hands that consecrate, or bless ;
Whose unction health to Priests and Kings supplies
In duty's need or empire's harrowing stress.

Hail, holy Chrism !† which, like the Voice from
heaven
That once the Son on Jordan's bank reveal'd,
Is God's own signal of adoption, given
To those whom with His mark the Church hath
seal'd ;

* The Oil of the Catechumens ; used in the ceremonies of Holy Baptism, at the Ordination of Priests, and the Coronation of Sovereigns.

† The Chrism ; used in the ceremonies of Baptism, at Confirmation, the Consecration of Bishops, as well as that of churches, altars, and chalices, and in the Benediction of bells.

And whom, when ripening now for manhood's race,
 With sevenfold strength that Mother's arm endows,
 Fain by thine aid the character to trace
 Of CHRIST's own soldier on their youthful brows ;

With thee she claims to GOD each holy place,
 Or vessel, wrought for Eucharists sublime ;
 Or nerves the Pontiff with a crowning grace,
 Or tunes with sacred voice the belfry's chime.

Bear off, ye ministers, the sacred store,
 By blessing hallow'd, and with blessings rife ;
 Whence from a hundred founts the streams shall
 pour
 That brace or cheer the Church's annual life.

Holy Thursday.

THE PROCESSION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT AFTER MASS.



THE notes of joy have died away,
Sweet bell and organ shrill,
As gather round the Light of day
The clouds of coming ill.

The Feast is o'er ; and Thou art fain
Thy Passion to begin ;
And Judas covenants for gain
To work his work of sin.

The ruffian bands his call await,
With staff, and sword, and lance ;
And now they near the garden-gate,
And stealthily advance.

I hear the armour's sullen clash
Break on the stilly night ;
I see the torches' lurid flash
Flouting the pale moonlight.

Sweet Saviour ! 'tis the time for us
To rally round Thy throne ;
The rebel world may treat Thee thus,
But we are still Thine own.

Then come, ye servants of the Lord,
And reverently bring
The choicest of your sacred hoard,
To grace your glorious King ;

The air which floats around His Head
With odorous clouds imbue ;
The ground which feels His sovereign tread
With flowers of spring bestrew ;

Let guards His royal path escort,
Let warning lights be there ;
But not the traitor's fell cohort,
But not the torches' glare.

Come, O ye choirs, your voices raise
As He is borne on high ;
And drown with notes of Christian praise
The rabble's furious cry.

So let us bring Him home, and there
Our meek devotion pay ;
And travel o'er, in faith and prayer,
That bitter Night and Day.

Good Friday.

AT THE SOLEMN OFFICE.*



THY heart, O widow'd Spouse, is like to break ;
 Thou canst not speak ;
Thou canst but hide thy face, and sob, and weep,
 In anguish deep,
And ask to know, as Angels only know,
 Thy master-woe.

Thy master-woe has pierc'd and quite possess'd
 Thine aching breast ;
I miss thy cheerful gait, thy radiant brow ;
 Where are they now ?
Thou mourn'st as only mothers use to mourn
 Their eldest-born.

Thy fitful strains, thy maimèd rites express
 All thy distress ;

* On coming to the Altar, the Priest and Sacred Ministers prostrate during the space of a *Miserere*.

Though manifold thy thoughts, thy words are few ;
Yet full in view
Thou sett'st the Crucified ; thy sayings tend
All to one end ;

'Tis but the One and Only Sacrifice
That meets the eyes ;
To-day, for once, that Rite thou must omit
Which flows from It ;
Because the primal Type and Counterpart
Locks up thy heart.

Brief prayer, symbolic action, Holy Writ,
Successive flit ;
Prayer for the souls Thou cam'st in flesh to call
From error's thrall ;
And Truth, or chronicl'd by pen divine,
Or couch'd in sign.

And now that words and signs have done their all
Him to recall,
Pass we, with sorrowing hearts and downcast eyes,
To where He lies,
As once He lay on Mary's aching breast,
Dead and at rest ;

And thence with funeral pomp conduct Him home,
As to the Tomb;
Beside the Corse with Magdalen to wait,
And meditate
How dread a prison-house were Earth's abode
Reft of its God.

Good Friday.

THE PRAYERS FOR ALL ESTATES OF MEN.

(Adapted from the Missal.)



Look down, sweet Saviour, from Thy holy place !
We are Thy children, this Thy day of Grace,
When friends and foes, the evil with the good,
All claim Thy love, for all have shar'd Thy Blood.

Look on Thy Church, Thy handmaid and Thy Bride,
Lest sin infect her, or lest harm betide ;
Let kings obey, and farthest nations own
Her gentle rule, and bend before her throne.

Look on Thy Vicar, call'd by Thee to bear
Thy sceptre's weight and 'all the Churches' care ;'
With light direct him, and with strength sustain
The burdens of his charge, and bless his reign.

Look on Thy Bishops, pastors of Thy sheep,
Guide them with counsel, and in safety keep,
With priests and levites, bound by vow to Thee,
And holy Ministers of each degree.

Look on our Catechumens ; and unlock
Their hearts when Thou shalt at the portal knock,
And ope to them Thy mercy's gate, that so
Pure streams of grace into those hearts may flow.

And oh ! ye well-belovèd, let us pray
That GOD would chase all pain and ill away ;
Plague's blighting spot, and Famine's gnawing fang,
And Sorrow's fret, and sharp Disease's pang ;

And break the chain, and loose the prison-bar,
And guide the steps that travel from afar ;
The sick to health, the bruis'd to peace restore,
And bring the labouring vessel safe to shore.

Last, on the foes who mar Thy Truth or hide,
Or e'en Thy Church with causeless strife divide,
Look down in pity ! bring them home, O Lord ;
That all be one, and Thou by all ador'd.

Saviour ! and is Thy store of mercy spent ?
Dare we to ask—O yes, Thou wilt relent ;
Nor—though it be to-day—wilt Thou refuse
To look in love on unbelieving Jews ;

Their fathers slew Thee, but Thou prayed'st for
them,

Nor wilt Thou yet those children quite condemn ;
But hush ! enough ! JESUS is bleeding there—
Bend not the knee, but softly speak the prayer.*

Hear us again ! one only favour more ;
There are, O GOD, who e'en Thyself ignore—
Pagans, idolators ; convert *their* hate,
And thus Thy mercy's triumph consummate.

* This is the only prayer at which the words *Flectamus genua* are omitted ; and the omission is generally supposed to express the Church's unwillingness, in this instance, to adopt a form used in mockery by the Jews during our Lord's Passion.

Good Friday.

THE ADORATION OF THE CROSS AND THE REPROACHES.



How meek Thou liest on thy lowly bed,
My dearest Saviour, while with noiseless tread
A train of Christian mourners comes to greet,
With loving kiss devout, Thy sacred Feet !
Rich with the poor, the gentle and the brave,
Priests with their flocks—for all have souls to save—
While friends are join'd with friends, and mothers
guide

The tottering steps of nurslings at their side ;
Mindful of Him who, living, deign'd to say,
' My Kingdom is of them and such as they.'

And now they pause, and own on bended knee
The Deity that lives through death in Thee ;
And fall before Thy lifeless Form, and there
Sob out their souls in one heart-spoken prayer,
And bury deep Thy bleeding wounds within
Their voiceless griefs and long arrears of sin.

Thy lips are still'd ; I heard Thee speak anon
Seven Words of love, but now the last is gone ;
Yet on mine ear wild notes of music steal,
Plaintive and sad. What truth do they reveal ?
Ah ! now I know : Thou wilt not chide us, Lord ;
And yet 'twere meet that in our ear were pour'd
The words of keen reproach, for all that we,
The purchas'd of Thy Blood, have laid on Thee.
Thou wilt not chide us ; but the Church, Thy Bride
(Thy Widow now), who watches by Thy side,
Takes up for Thee, in calm avenging tone,
The note of keen rebuke Thy pity had foregone.

THE REPROACHES.

(Translated from the Missal.)

' What, O My people, have I done to thee ?
What have I done ? how wrong'd thee ? Answer Me.
From Egypt's land I led and rescued thee,
And thou hast wrought a bitter Cross for Me.

Response.

Holy God,
Holy and Strong,
Holy and Immortal,
Have mercy on us.

Full forty years along the desert sand
I led thee with a Father's gentle hand,
And gave thee for thy meat the Angels' food,
And brought thee to a fertile land and good ;
Was it for this which I have done for thee
That thou prepared'st this bitter Cross for Me ?

Holy God, &c.

What could I do, and have not done for Mine ?
I planted thee a fair and fruitful vine,
And thou hast serv'd Me bitterly enough,
And with thine acrid juices, crude and rough,
My parch'd and fever'd lips hast rudely plied,
And plung'd a javelin in thy Saviour's Side.

Holy God, &c.

Egypt and her first-born I scourg'd for thee ;
And thou hast scourg'd and basely dealt with Me.

What, O My people, &c.

I led thee forth from Egypt, and for thee
Drown'd Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea ;
And thou for paltry gain hast barter'd Me.

What, O My people, &c.

For thee I cleft apart the billowy tide ;
And thou hast plung'd a javelin in My Side.

What, O My people, &c.

I with a pillar'd cloud prevented thee ;
And thou to Pilate's hall hast hurried Me.

What, O My people, &c.

With manna in the wild I nourish'd thee ;
And thou didst scourge and rudely buffet Me.

What, O My people, &c.

With water from the rock thy thirst I quench'd ;
And thou hast Me with gall unkindly drench'd.

What, O My people, &c.

The kings of Canaan once I struck for thee ;
Thou with a reed hast rudely smitten Me.

What, O my people, &c.

The sceptre of a king I gave to thee ;
And thou hast set a crown of thorns on Me.

What, O My people, &c.

I gave thee power, and royalty, and name ;
And thou hast hung Me on a Cross of shame.

What, O My people, &c.

O faithful Cross, thou peerless Tree !^c
No forest boasts the like to thee,
Leaf, flower, and bud ;
Sweet is the Wood, and sweet its weight,
And sweet the nails that penetrate
Thee, thou sweet Wood !

Sing, O my tongue, devoutly sing
The laurels of our glorious King ;
Proclaim aloud the triumph high
Of the Cross's victory,
How, on that Altar meekly laid,
Our price the world's Redeemer paid.

Response.

O faithful Cross, thou peerless Tree !
No forest boasts the like to thee,
Leaf, flower, and bud.

What time our first forefather ate
The fruit that wrought his woful fate,

* This translation appeared many years ago in a work entitled
" Devotions on the Passions."

Our high Creator piteous mourn'd
His righteous law by creatures scorn'd,
And, fain to make the damage good,
Through Wood revok'd the curse of wood.

Response.

Sweet is the Wood and sweet its weight,
And sweet the nails that penetrate
Thee, Thou sweet Wood !

Such was the deep mysterious plan
Devis'd to rescue ruin'd man ;
Devis'd with wondrous skill to meet
The crafty Tempter's arch deceit ;
While from one source promiscuous flow
The woe, and salve that cures the woe.

O faithful Cross, &c.

Fulfill'd the course of Advent years,
At length the promis'd Day appears ;
Stoops from His Father's lofty 'state
The Son who did the worlds create :
Meek Offspring of a Virgin's womb,
Enshrin'd in Flesh, behold Him come !

Sweet is the Wood, &c.

In pain He lies and straitenèd,
Within His narrow manger-bed ;
The while His Virgin Mother mild
Enwraps in rags her glorious Child ;
And lo ! the incarnate Feet and Hands
Of GOD are swath'd in beggar's bands !

O faithful Cross, &c.

And now, six lustral courses run,
His task of love is well-nigh done ;
The Saviour, of His own free will,
Prepares His Passion to fulfil ;
And on the Cross the Victim lies
Bound for the dreadful Sacrifice.

Sweet is the Wood, &c.

Gaul His drink, behold Him languish,
While His tender Flesh with anguish,
Thorns, and nails, and javelin fierce,
One by one, acutely pierce ;
Till from His wounded Side the Blood,
With Water mingled, yields a Flood,
Which earth and sea, which world and skies,
From sin's pollution purifies.

O faithful Cross, &c.

Bow down thy branches, haughty Tree ;
Suspend thy wonted cruelty ;
Relax thy tighten'd arms ; repress,
For once, thine inborn stubbornness ;
Thy Royal burden gently bear,
And spare our dying GOD, oh spare !

Sweet is the Wood, &c.

'Twas thou alone wert meet esteem'd
The Lamb to bear, who man redeem'd ;
'Tis thou, unshaken Ark, bedew'd
With streams of all-availing Blood,
That shipwreck'd man dost safely guide,
Secure in port for aye to bide.

O faithful Cross, &c.

To the Undivided Three in heaven
Be glory, praise, and honour given,
Alike to Father, and to Son,
And Paraclete, the Three in One ;
Yea, let the adoring world proclaim
Of Three and One the glorious Name.

Amen.

Sweet is the Wood, &c.

Holy Saturday.

THE RENEWAL OF NATURE.



Behold, I make all things new. *Apoc. xxi. 5.*

THE glorious sun, when first he sheds his rays
O'er earth's expanse and ocean's watery plain,
Folds in the vesture of his ample blaze
Each part and province of his great domain :

The desert's vastness, and the shore's recess,
The mountain-peaks that human step defy,
The lakes that slumber in the wood's caress,
All drink his light, and bask beneath his eye.

When CHRIST, our Sun, from death to life arose,
Renew'd Himself, He made all creatures new ;
Earth caught His orient beams, and Nature glows
Fresh with the lustre of Redemption's hue.

Man first, enthron'd by GOD in high estate,
But more than all His work by sin impair'd ;
In restoration, as in ruin great,
The glory of the Resurrection shar'd.

Nor noblest things alone, but vile and low
 (In Nature's order low, till rais'd by grace),
Revive and glisten with a healthful glow,
 Reflected from Creation's alter'd face.

Clear'd of their taint, or of their malice shorn,
 E'en noxious elements in CHRIST we prize ;
Their sting or vileness gone, themselves re-born
 To goodlier use and holier destinies.

The earth that lies neglected o'er the land,
 Or bruis'd by thoughtless man's imperious tread,
Reclaim'd, and benison'd by priestly hand,
 Clasps in its strong embrace the holy dead.

The air that feeds the desolating storm,
 Yet fans the spirit's as the body's life,
Returns through consecrated lips, in form
 Of breath, with power instinct and blessings rife.

The water, once the world's absorbing grave,
 Hath learn'd of CHRIST its mission to reverse,
Charg'd by His word with power to cleanse and save
 The souls He deigns with loving care to nurse.

The fire, obedient to the Exorcist's sign,
 Forgets its fury and controls its might ;
 Tam'd to instruct, and taught in peace to shine ;
 The type of zeal, and source of sacred light ;

Whose power unlocks the fragrant clouds that rise
 In fleecy ringlets, when our Lord is nigh,
 Or present in the Bloodless Sacrifice,
 Or thron'd in form of majesty on high ;

Whose steady light, like some suspended gem,
 Marks the sweet Sacrament ; or, like the star
 That halted o'er the Crib of Bethlehem,
 Luring the pilgrim sages from afar ;

Or like the lamp that from some misty height
 Looks on the seaman's wanderings like an eye,
 That tells, in howling winds' and waves' despite,
 That love is vigilant, and succour nigh.

I know, O Lord, that Thou art near to-day ;
 These blessings, which around Thy Presence
 throng,
 Are heralds sure, that come to clear Thy way,
 And chant the prelude of our Easter song.

Holy Saturday.

‘LUMEN CHRISTI.’



After the Benediction of the Fire, the Deacon lights, in succession, the three candles which surmount the Reed (or staff), singing, each time in a higher key, the words ‘Lumen Christi.’ The people answer, ‘Deo gratias.’ *From the Rubric of the Missal.*

THE blessing o’er, a light appears,
And with the light a voice ;
Arise, O Christian, dry thy tears ;
Prepare thee to rejoice.

‘The Light of CHRIST !’ O, grateful sound !
I know not all its force ;
But I will bow me to the ground,
And wait His Wisdom’s course.

‘The Light of CHRIST !’ it says again,
In shriller tone, as though
Some Angel echo’d on the strain,
Caught in its heavenward flow.

‘The Light of CHRIST!’ one echo more ;
 So sweet and strange the theme,
 That Angels tell it o’er and o’er,
 To prove it more than dream.

And now a joyous plaintive song,*
 With holy lessons stor’d,
 In graceful measure floats along,
 Half hymn, half Gospel-word ;

Joyous, yet staid ; for still the joy
 Half wrestles with the gloom ;
 Nor dare its glittering hosts deploy
 Too near the unopen’d Tomb.

In strain subdued the accents roll,
 Though ting’d with Paschal glow ;
 For not as yet is furl’d the scroll
 Inscrib’d with words of woe ;

As if the lark would fain prevent
 The glimpses of the day,

* * The *Exultet*, or *Præconium*, sung at the blessing of the Paschal Light.

And with her warbling note were blent
The night-bird's pensive lay.

Still Holy Church's aspect tells
That Easter is not come ;
Veil'd walls, hush'd music, silent bells,
Bespeak a widow'd home.

But thou art there, thou Christ-like light,*
So earnest and so calm,
Like sign of constellation bright
Set on a stately palm.

In token of the coming Day,
Thy fires symbolic burn ;
Type of the Lord's unclouded sway ;
Pledge of His quick return.

* The Paschal Candle.

Holy Saturday.

AT THE BENEDICTION OF THE FONT.

(Adapted chiefly from the Missal.)



‘ As pants the hart to find the running brooks,
E’en thus my soul with strong affection looks
To Thee, O Living GOD, Holy and True,
Whose streams its thirst shall slake, its youth
renew :’

So vents the Church her burden’d heart’s desire,
As towards the healing Fountain moves the white-
rob’d choir.

Last, because noblest, in the gracious train
Of blessings, fram’d to exorcise the stain
Of primal sin, that cleaves to things of earth,
Our Mother gifts the source of our New Birth ;
And thus conjures, in her majestic tones,
The Creature, dower’d by GOD to save her little
ones :

‘ O mighty Element ! O healthful Flood !
Whereon the Holy Spirit deign’d to brood
Incumbent in Creation’s misty prime,
Earlier than light, and life, and form, and time ;
Bear now that Spirit on thy crystal face,
The mirror of GOD’s Love, the favour’d Home of
Grace.

‘ O, strong to punish, stronger still to save !
The young world’s laver, though its whelming
grave ;
The streams whence GOD could swift destruction
bring
Change, at His word, to Christ’s Vivific Spring ;
Life’s Fountain now, of old the gulph of sin,
That, where Vice came to naught, there Virtue
might begin.

‘ Bend on Thy Church, O GOD, Thy guardian Eye,
And Thy Regenerations multiply,
Who op’st a well-spring at Thy children’s side,
For them, and for the nations far and wide,
That all who seek Thine Empire, or who own,
Through GOD the Holy Ghost, may love Thine Only
Son.

‘ The Font our hands for man’s New Birth prepare,
 May it His fructifying graces share ;
 That, in the Church’s bosom re-conceiv’d,
 The native seed may grow, of sin reliev’d ;
 And those whom age or sex divides in time,
 A heavenly bond may knit in childhood’s common
 prime.

‘ May no foul fiend your burnish’d spirits daunt,
 O peaceful souls ! Demons of hate, avaunt !
 Come, Holy Ghost ! Come, purifying Fire !
 Hence dreams of ill ! Hence every vain desire !
 No place is here for Treachery’s ambushade,
 Or Cunning’s slimy track, or base Corruption’s
 trade.

‘ O, be this Creature innocent and pure,
 From Satan’s touch and harm’s approach secure ;
 Be it a Living Fount, a cleansing Tide,
 A Bath regenerative, which may hide
 And bury sin, and its enthrallment break,
 And dull imprison’d souls to conscious freedom
 wake.

‘ Creature of GOD ! we bless Thee in His Name,
 The Living, True, and Holy ; yea, the Same

Who bade thee, by His Voice Creative, stand
Apart, nor share the Empire of the land ;
Whose Spirit, couching dove-like on thy breast,
Spread o'er its range the plumage of His fostering
Vest.

' Who fix'd in Paradise thy gushing source,
That pour'd thee o'er the world in four-fold
course ;
Who Mara's bitter taste to sweetness turn'd,
And heal'd the nauseous draught that Israel
spurn'd ;
And struck the rock, that from its heart might
teem,
In grateful gushing force, the cool and affluent
stream.

' We bless thee too with CHRIST's Most Holy Sign,
Who chang'd thee, at the nuptial feast, to wine ;
Who on thy buoyant plains impassive trod
(Proud to uphold the printless steps of GOD) ;
Who to His great Forerunner meekly gave
To bow His gracious Head in Jordan's honour'd
wave ;

**‘ Who on the Cross, from out His piercèd Side
Of Blood and Water pour’d the Saving Tide ;
Who, ere He mounted to His glorious Rest,
His chosen band at parting thus address’d :**

**“ Go, teach the nations : make them One in Me,
Baptising in the Name of the Ever-Blessed Three.” ’**

Holy Saturday.

AFTER THE BENEDICTION OF THE FONT.



**THE rites are done which now unite
In sacrament divine
The Spirit's All-Creative Might
With earth's material sign.**

**Of old, an Angel-visitant
With healing virtue came
To bless Bethesda's pool—the haunt
Of maim'd, and blind, and lame.**

**A Guest than Angel mightier far
Hath visited this place,
Whose hand shall loose the envious bar
That locks the stream of Grace.**

**The sin-bound souls, the darken'd eyes,
Shall hence their med'cine draw ;
And wake to strength, to light arise,
Cur'd of corruption's flaw.**

And lo ! the word hath scarce been spoke,
That gifts the sacred Bath
With power to heal, when chains are broke,
And love replaces wrath.*

E'en now, ere CHRIST have burst the grave,
His neophytes are nigh,
To show that He who died to save
Shall rise to justify.

Beside the Sepulchre they wait,
Their souls all clean and bright ;
As did those Angels near the gate,
Clad in their robes of white.

But we, who are not pure as they,
Must do one service more ;
And keep our mourning vests, and pray
In penance as before ;

And ask the Saints, in glorious choir
Assembled, one by one,
For grace to help our strong desire,
And sin and death to shun.

* The rubric provides for baptisms immediately after the Benediction of the Font, and at Rome this provision is carried out.

With penance' tones did we begin
Our Lent in holy fear ;
And at its close the notes of sin
Still echo on our ear.*

But lo ! what gracious change is this
That lights the fading scene ;
The signs of all but finish'd bliss,
Where deepest gloom hath been ?

The weeds and funeral trappings gone,
The wedding-vests they bring ;
And where was winter's depth, anon
There breaks the mirth of spring :

As in far-distant climes, they say,
'Tis rul'd by Nature's laws
That night dissolves in brightest day,
With scarce a twilight's pause.

The strains of prayer have almost died,
Their notes successive pass
In drooping cadence, till they glide
Into the holy Mass.

* The priest and ministers rise to change their vestments at the word in the Litanies 'Peccatores.'

A moment more of sweet delay
And expectation's thrill,
And then our souls shall soar away,
And drink their rapture's fill.

'Glory to God!' ring out, ye bells ;
Ye choirs, your voices raise ;
While cannons roar and organ swells
With tones of welcome praise.

As quick as lightning, and as bright,
The joyful accents glance,
As if the Church to sudden light
Had started from a trance ;

And drew on waking Memory's hoard,
From out the wondrous blaze,
For symbol apt and life-like word
To vent her heart's amaze.

Lessons of Apostolic lore,
A glimpse of Gospel news,
A psalm from David's golden store,
Her page with light suffuse ;

Circling the changeless Sacrifice
With their bright coronet
Of exquisite varieties,
Around in order set.

Yet lacks there something to the bliss,
Till holy Church can cease
To think with shame on Judas' kiss
Of treachery, not of peace.*

Though joyous, still she halts awhile
Beside the gulph of sorrow,
And pauses, ere she dare to smile,
As she will smile to-morrow.

* The kiss of peace is omitted in the Mass of Holy Saturday; it is generally said, on account of the treacherous kiss of Judas, still fresh in the memory of the Church.

Easter Day.



Surrexit Dominus vere, Alleluia. *Invitatory for Easter Day.*

ALLELUIA ! CHRIST is Risen !

**Light hath broke on Egypt's gloom ;
Life's own Self hath burst the prison
Of the seal'd and guarded Tomb.**

**Time there was when Christians meeting
One another on the road,
Gave and took the Easter greeting—
' CHRIST is Risen ! Thanks to GOD !'**

**Pious customs, soul-sustaining,
By the godless world let slip,
Live, unwavering, unwaning,
In the Church's guardianship.**

**Thus, in church or oratory,
Ye who met this 'Day of days,'
Heard and told the wondrous story,
Chanted still in ancient phrase.**

Sense's power and reason's limit
Fail to grasp a truth like this ;
Angel's voice alone can hymn it,
Angels only scan its bliss.

Joy, like grief, is simple-spoken ;
Each its darling secret hoards ;
Hearts when full, and hearts when broken,
Nurse their thoughts, and stint their words.

Saints who hail'd the Resurrection,
Holy Brethren, Sisters meek,
Who your Lord with strong affection
Pin'd to miss, and ran to seek :

Peter, John, Salome, Mary,
Magdalen, blest Penitent,—
Ye have writ the commentary
Of this Mystery's intent.

Be your acts its celebration,
By your measure mete its worth ;
Be your praise the compensation
For the faltering lauds of earth.

' More than all, O Virgin-Mother !
Stores of light couldst thou disclose ;
Thou who shar'dst, as shar'd no other,
JESUS' joys and JESUS' woes.

Help the thoughts I ought to cherish,
Prompt the words which should be mine ;
Better far should pass and perish
Thoughts and words that jar with thine.

Saints in glory shall discover
What thine eager love descried,
When thy Son, His Passion over,
Stood victorious at thy side.

' Joy to thee, O Queen of Heaven !
He thou didst deserve to bear
All the bonds of death hath riven,
As He said ; O, speed our prayer !'

Easter Day.

CHRIST'S ABIDING PRESENCE WITH HIS ELECT.



Resurrexi, et adhuc tecum sum. *Introit of the Mass for Easter Day.*

CHRISTIAN ! I am with thee still,
Always loving, always near ;
Whether good betide or ill,
I am with thee—never fear.

Didst thou dream that I forsook thee
In My Passion's bitter smart ?
Christian, no ! 'Twas then I took thee
Closest to My tender Heart.

When Mine Agony oppress'd Me,
When the Bloody Sweat ran down,
Were the woes that most distress'd Me,
Christian, thinkest thou, Mine Own ?

When My Soul was sorely troubled,
Then 'twas most I thought of thee ;
All My sharpest griefs were doubled
By the load thou laidst on Me.

Every where thine image met Me,
E'en as though were none beside ;
Could I leave thee or forget thee,
When 'twas thou for whom I died ?

Now My grief and shame are ended ;
Death is vanquish'd, Glory won,
Satan baffl'd, Man befriended,
God propitious in His Son.

Did thy craven spirit fail thee
When it lost Me out of sight ?
Did the pangs of doubt assail thee,
Doubt of Mine inherent Might ?

Did not legions without number
Burn to stay My Passion's course ?
Did My GODHEAD seem to slumber
When 'twas I that stemm'd Its force ?

Death itself could not restrain Me—
Weak its hold, though sharp its strife ;
Nor the narrow Tomb contain Me—
How could cerements bind The Life ?

Lo ! I stand before thee glorious ;
I am Risen, and am here,
Over sin and hell victorious ;
I am with thee—never fear.

Easter Day.

THE EVENING BENEDICTION.



'MID the hush'd echoes of the Upper Room
The chosen Ten had met that First Day's eve ;
'Twixt dawning gladness pois'd and passing gloom,
Too firm to doubt, too fearful to believe.

Could they review those Three eventful Days—
With sorrows fraught, and memories unblest ;
Their Lord's rebuke, their own half-loyal ways—
And quite their hearts of grief and shame divest ?

Could they forget their failing, and their flight,
One comrade's weakness, and another's crime ;
And all the wonders of that former Night—
Its acts of winning love, its words sublime ?

Yet joy would flash across their pensive talk,
As one was fain with surety to declare
How CHRIST was seen upon the earth to walk ;
He was alive ! but still He was not *there*.

The Paschal moonlight through the lattice gleam'd,
 Silvering the shades of Evening's dreamy hour,
When on their sight a more than vision beam'd,
 No sleight of eye, no freak of fancy's power.

A glorious Form into their presence came,
 Piercing with arrowy force the bolted door ;
In grace the Same, in aspect not the Same,
 With Him who bless'd their acts so oft before.

All saw Him chang'd—how chang'd ! but chiefly he
 Who at the Supper lean'd upon His Breast,
And watch'd on Calvary's steep the Agony
 That o'er His frame its harrowing trace impress'd.

Sorrow is past, and death. What is He now ?
 No flower so beautiful, no sun so bright ;
The note of empire sits upon His brow,
 His Form is circled with a vest of light.

Yet hardly dar'd they hope the vision true,
 Till to the fullness of their joy they woke,
As the known accents, ' Peace be unto you !'
 From Him who gives the peace He proffers, broke.

Dear to the exile are the songs of home,
To captives dear the message of release ;
But dearest to the burden'd Christian come
From JESUS' lips His promises of peace.

Such the calm joy Thou givest, Lord, to-night,
To all who bow before Thine altar-throne ;
And seek the grace of that celestial Rite
Which pours Thy Benediction on Thine own ;

Which knits in privilege, as in degree,
Us with Thy children of the olden time,
Since Thou art One with all, and all with Thee,
In this Thy Church's age, as in her prime.

We too are gather'd in our Upper Room
(Thy Church), with grateful hearts, but records
sad ;

Come in our midst, O Risen Saviour, come,
And bless us with Thine Hand, and make us glad!

Lo ! Thou art here. Hence doubt, hence vain alarms ;
Let carking cares and envious whispers cease ;
CHRIST bears us in His Everlasting Arms,
And lifts His Voice on high, and sheds His Peace.

This morn, with loving hearts and conscience pure,
We met Him at His Sacramental Feast ;
This eve He comes our pardon to assure,
And shadow forth the image of our rest.

Easter-tide.



Mane nobiscum, Domine, quoniam advesperascit. Paschal Office.

BIDE with us, Lord ; for eve is near,
And dreams of coming ill
Invade us ; but we will not fear,
So Thou be with us still.

Our lives are wearing fast away,
Our work is incomplete ;
Regrets behind, before a Day
Of reckoning to meet.

Bide with us, &c.

The world is grown too bold to bear
Thy Church's stringent rule ;
Her easy maxims own no share
In Sainthood's wiser school.

Bide with us, &c.

The Church is striving hard with sin,
Yet sinners will not heed ;
Without are fightings, fears within,
Hush'd sighs, and hearts that bleed.

Bide with us, &c.

Thy holy Vicar's name profan'd
Too near his very throne,
Or languidly by those maintain'd
Who call themselves his own.

Bide with us, &c.

Thy pious counsels disesteem'd,
Or mock'd by laws unchaste ;
And heavenward contemplation deem'd
A weakness or a waste.

Bide with us, &c.

Darkness in place of light rever'd,
And each most favour'd land,
Where GOD in simple faith is fear'd,
Stamp'd with Delusion's brand.

Bide with us, &c.

But us nor Error's noxious glare,
Nor fell Confusion's night,
Shall fondly cheat or rudely scare,
So Thou vouchsafe Thy light.
Bide with us, &c.

Ascension Day.



At length, Eternal Son,
Thy journey Thou hast sped,
So graciously begun,
So grandly finishèd !

What Angel shall recount
Its annals, overspread
From Bethlehem to the Mount
That felt Thy latest tread ?

Its deeds of mercy wrought,
Its words of counsel spoken,
The stores of blessing bought,
The bonds of error broken !

Lord, since, on Easter morn,
Triumphant Thou didst rise,
Thou seem'dst a Sun just torn
From its congenial skies ;

Too fair, too glorious
For such a world as ours :
Thy Royal stay with us
Was measur'd thence by hours.

Thou show'dst Thyself to none,
Save to Thy chosen band ;
And when the sight was won,
The parting was at hand.

Yet hadst Thou work to do,
E'en in those Forty Days ;
New gifts for men to sue,
A world-wide Church to raise ;

And Sacraments to found,
And Preachers to sustain,
Whose words might deal around
The grace Thou diedst to gain.

Where didst Thou bide the time
Thy brethren saw Thee not ?
Where was the honour'd clime,
The consecrated spot,

That knew Thee, felt Thee, Lord,
Those glorious nights and days ?
What Saint Thy steps ador'd,
What Angel mark'd Thy ways ?

I will not seek to know
What Thou wouldst fain conceal ;
And yet was one, I trow,
Thy secret could reveal.

I think Thy Mother knew
Thine earthly whereabouts,
Though hid it were from view
Of other souls devout.

With eager step and light
She journey'd to the place
Whence Thou shouldst take Thy flight
Through pathless realms of space.

And there in worship bow'd,
As Thou didst soar on high,
Till the overlapping cloud
Refus'd Thee to her eye.

Beyond that cloud a train
Of duteous Angels waits,
To lead Thee, twain and twain,
To the everlasting gates ;

Chanting those tones sublime
That David erst forebode ;
That down the stream of time
Through Holy Church have flow'd :

‘ Prepare, eternal homes !
Ye portals, open wide ;
The King of glory comes,
His ransom'd by His side.

‘ Who is this King all-glorious ;
This Lord of grace and might,
O'er all the foes victorious
That dare Him to the fight ?’

So sang the angelic choirs
Their sweet alternate song ;
Striking their golden lyres
Their heavenward path along.

And O, what joy awoke,
As near the courts they drew ;
And, starting as they spoke,
The portals open flew ;

And countless subjects own'd,
And countless hosts ador'd,
The King of glory thron'd,
The SON to heaven restor'd.

Whit Sunday.

GREAT Feast of the Spirit ! thou ownest a light,
Mid the joys of our seasons unmatch'd and alone;
Than Christmas less mirthful, than Easter less
bright,
Yet with brightness and cheerfulness singly thine
own.

No bitterness waits on thine Advent, sweet Guest,
No sorrowful retrospect saddens Thy way ;
The Son, by His life of rebuke and unrest,
Hath prepar'd Thee a home for Thy permanent
stay.

No Temple was His when He came in the night ;
He was born in the shed of a pitiless inn ;
But Thou, Blessed Spirit, cam'st down in the light,
With a Church all equipp'd to enshrine Thee
within.

They pray'd for Thy Coming, in holy retreat,
Those Twelve great Apostles, with Mary their
Queen ;

They waited in hope and in silence to greet
Thy Descent, in the morning's unruffled serene.

Thou cam'st on the Son in the form of a Dove,
On Apostles Thou lightedst in mitres of fire ;
To Him Thou wert sent as a Witness of love,
To them as the Spirit of fervent desire.

O Voice of the stammering ! Stay of the meek !
How calmly Thy beams on Thy gifted ones shine !
The house of the poor and the fold of the weak
Is chang'd to a Synod of sages divine.

In Mary, the Seat of Thy Wisdom on earth,
A channel of grace Thou wert pleas'd to create ;
'Twas from her that the Son in the Flesh took His
Birth,
'Tis from her that the beams of the Church radi-
ate.

With dignity mild and with sweetness sedate,
'Twas hers by command and example to preach ;

By the Seal of her Mission surmounted, she sate,
Like an oracle, mute, till invited to teach.

On the rest Thou didst zeal apostol confer,
O Spirit of Pentecost ! Eloquent Fire !
With the courage which never was lacking in her
Their hearts on this Day Thou wert first to in-
spire.

O ye who remember the deeds of the Spirit,
His marvels of power and His conquests of love,
His miracles, gifts, and the treasures of merit,
That fit all His Saints for the glories above ;

Come, join in His praise in this Feast of His
Coming,
Proclaim ye His triumphs with emulous strife ;
'Tis our Agapè—Banquet of Love all-consuming,
The Church's own Birthday, the date of her Life.

THE SUMMER QUARTER.

Trinity Sunday.

THE MOST HOLY TRINITY.



GOD! of life, and light, and motion,
Cause and Centre, Fount and Home;
Limitless and tideless Ocean;
Past and Present and To come;

Unbeginning, as Unending;
Uncontroll'd by time or space;
Undefin'd, yet Unextending;
Boundless, yet in every place;

Self-existent; Uncreated,
Underiv'd, evolv'd of none;
In sublimest peace instated,
Perfect in Thyself alone;

With unclouded vision seeing,
Spread o'er one eternal page,
All the mysteries of Being,
Traversing the course of age;

Every art of man detecting,
Sketch'd in form or shap'd in fact ;
All his cherish'd plans inspecting,
Lock'd in heart or bar'd in act ;

Loving all, and all befriending
With a love as deep as wide ;
And to meanest creatures bending
Low, as if were none beside.

GOD the FATHER ! Whose relation
With the Sole-begotten Son,
By a mystic Generation,
Stood ere Time had learn'd to run ;

GOD the SON ! by tie supernal
Ever with the Father bound ;
In the glorious folds eternal
Of one single Nature wound ;

GOD the SPIRIT ! Stream Vivific,
Ceaselessly by Both outpour'd,
And, in Union Beatific,
Equally with Both ador'd :

GOD the FATHER, SON, and SPIRIT !

**Three in One, and One in Three,
Thine united glories merit
Thanks and praise continually ;**

**Praise to Thee and adoration
On Thy Festival be done,
For the blessed Incarnation
Of the Coëternal Son ;**

**For the Coming of the Spirit ;
For the grace of Mary's life ;
For the joys that Saints inherit
When they cease from earthly strife.**

**More than all, be praise unending
Paid throughout the Church to Thee
For the Majesty transcending
Of Thy Triune Deity !**

**Sun of splendour never waning,
Fount of sweetness never dry,
Staff of comfort all-sustaining,
Ever-Blessed Trinity !**

Corpus Christi.

IN solemn Passion-tide
We mark'd a beauteous Flower ;
But then we had no heart to bide
In garden or in bower ;
So we will backward turn, and seek that Flower,
And twine it with our wreath in this more joyous
hour.

In mournful Holy Week,
E'en at the festal Board,
We scarce could think, or freely speak,
Save of Thy Passion, Lord ;
Though fain to muse on that eventful Night
When Thou didst frame and found our Eucharistic
Rite.

Then Easter came ; and yet
There lack'd one jewel fair
To grace the radiant coronet
That we would have Thee wear ;

For when Thy Risen splendours fill'd our sight,
They dimm'd all else by their surpassing light.

And then there was a lull,
When Thou hadst gone on high ;
And Glory's golden cup seem'd full,
E'en to satiety ;
When lo ! revealed for seven unbroken days,
The Spirit of GOD absorb'd the creature's prostrate
praise.*

Nor could we rest on earth
Till we had gaz'd on heaven,
Or tune aright our holy mirth
Till time and space were given,
To nerve and brace Devotion's languid eye
In the still depths of the All-Holy Trinity.

So now we will retrace
Our steps along the way,
And visit once again the place
Where first our treasure lay ;
And take, and burnish, and in order set
This precious gem, extracted from its bed of jet.

* The Octave of Pentecost is one of the three which are kept entire. The others are those of Epiphany and Easter.

'Tis the great Legacy
That CHRIST on us bestow'd,
Ere He sat down in majesty
At the Right Hand of GOD,
And gave to men His Deity to love,
While saints adore the Manhood joined with It
above.

Beautiful Sacrament!
Wherein, by power Divine,
Substance alike and Accident
So wondrously combine
To sate the famish'd soul, and sweetly win
Each sense to prize the Gift that lies those veils
within.

Thou must a Form assume,
Thy Deity to shroud;
But yet Thou wouldst not sternly come
In whirlwind, flame, or cloud;
Thou treatest with Thine own in gentler mood,
Veiling Thy power in semblance of our daily
food.

Thou mightst have surely wound
Such vestures of defence
Thy glorious Sacrament around,
As would have humbled sense,
And forc'd it with dull homage to confess
Thy grandeur, and its own complacent nothingness.

But rather than control
Our two-edg'd liberty,
Thou leav'st the unimprison'd soul
To good or evil free ;
Slow to avenge Thy rights, Thine honour guard,
That Thou our liberal love mayst welcome and
reward.

Ah ! Thou art still the Same ;
Thy well-known Self I trace,
Waiving each rightful claim,
Risking each proffer'd grace ;
Thyself postponing, so Thou mayst enthrall
Our souls in willing bonds, where thousands brave
Thy call.

Corpus Christi.

THE BLESSED SACRAMENT AND THE WORLD.



O FOOLISH, foolish World!
How madly hast thou hurl'd
Thy loving Saviour from His earthly throne,
Hoping to do Him spite;
Whereas thy fatal might
Hath wreak'd its vengeance on thyself alone.

Thou canst not bear to think
That thou art on the brink
Of death—perchance of worse than death—of
hell!

And so thou putt'st away
Fears of the coming Day,
And lov'st in bowers of fancied peace to dwell.

In England's olden times,
As still in other climes,
Our Lord went forth to bless the public ways;
And kings and queens were fain
To follow in His train,
And with their subjects witness to His praise.

Still find we, up and down,
In country or in town,
The footprints of our fathers' holier tread;
A relic here and there,
A pageant, or a fair,*
And old traditions floating round the dead.†

But substance have they none,
For CHRIST, their Light, is gone;
And they but as the ghosts of blessings bide;
Of inward sense bereft,
The husks alone are left;
No saving import theirs, no heavenward side.

What hast thou gain'd, O World?
Thy flag thou hast unfurl'd
With pompous blazonry o'er sea and land:
Thou flitt'st from place to place,
Spanning the bounds of space,
But all thy works are dead, thy counsels bann'd.

* In the town of Shrewsbury, where I passed my childhood, there used to be, and I believe still is, a Procession of the various Trades during one of the weeks of early summer, which I have since discovered to be the week of the Octave of Corpus Christi; and there is no doubt that this was originally a Procession of the Blessed Sacrament, accompanied by Guilds or Confraternities.

† Especially in Wales.

What hast thou gain'd ? Thy streets
Teeming with sin ; thy fleets
Mid ocean's perils blind to ocean's Star ;
Thy ways and fields unbless'd ;
Thy helpless Poor oppress'd,
And Error thron'd in Truth's dismantl'd car ;

Church and her priests despis'd ;
The Eucharist unpriz'd—
Coop'd within walls, and of Its honour shorn,
Or borne in breast, not hand,
Like something contraband,
And hid from pious eyes for fear of scorn.

Arise, O Lord, advance !
Thine old inheritance
Reclaim from strangers, in the world's despite ;
Though now with weeds o'ergrown,
Remember 'twas Thine own—
The island of Thy Saints, the home of Thy delight.

Corpus Christi.

THE BLESSED SACRAMENT IN A CATHOLIC COUNTRY.

Antwerp. Feast of the Assumption, 1863.



I STOOD at Antwerp on our Lady's Feast ;
The sun was bright, the bells peal'd joyfully,
The quaint old city laugh'd ; and from the crest
Of that sublime cathedral floated high
A bird-like pennon, while the frequent chime
Flung its glad music o'er the morning's prime.

Anon a sound of voices, far and faint—
So faint, that for a while 'twas question still
Whether 'twere festive hymn or funeral plaint ;
But as they near'd they broke in accents shrill,
Till in their surging tide an Ave came,
Sweet prelude of our Lady's beauteous name.

It was a goodly sight. In solemn guise
Array'd, our Lady's votaries were there ;
Guilds, schools, and holy confraternities,
And choirs with words of praise, and priests in
prayer,

And lordly banners group'd in order meet,
And flowers which Mary's love made doubly sweet.

High in the midst a gracious form was seen,
Rear'd on a throne of state, with jewell'd crown :
It was the form of that all-glorious Queen,
Scattering rich favours o'er her subject town ;
Unpleasing though to Art's fastidious taste,
Yet by a child-like people lov'd and grac'd.

Still lack'd there something to the gazer's heart,
That One alone can compass or supply :
'Twas beautiful ; and yet it seem'd but part
Of some yet holier solemnity ;
And e'en our Lady almost seem'd to smile,
And say, ' Ye seek your Saviour ; wait a while.'

Then grew upon the ear the signal bell,
That hushes idle words and worldly strife,
Blent with the stirring drum and gradual swell
Of voices hymning to the Lord of Life ;
And the sweet clash of censers toss'd on high,
As God in Sacramental guise came by.

Dearer to us, because to Him, than all
The pomp and state that gather'd round His throne,
The gold and jewels, most magnificent,
Was the pure love accorded by His own :
The bended knee, the kiss that claim'd to greet
The very ground that thrill'd beneath His Feet.

Parents brought infants in their arms to gain
His benediction ; others took their stand,
Waiting the progress of the gorgeous train,
And strew'd its path with flowers and silver sand ;
E'en acts so poor that loving Lord can please,
Who sees all hearts, and blesses as He sees.

Then would the train to some commanding space
Its course divert, and there its ranks expand ;
While on a throne th' All-Holy they would place,
Whom thence a vested priest would raise in hand,
And give to prostrate hearts His grace to share
In Whom all creatures live, and move, and are.

The city travers'd, on its homeward march
The bright Procession set ; and when the King
Enter'd His House beneath the portal arch,
A hundred voices tun'd their notes to sing,

As up the clear broad aisle He pass'd along,
Flank'd by the worship of the parted throng.

O happiest of nations, ye who keep
The old traditions and the Church's rules !
Which when ye scorn, or suffer them to sleep,
Hush'd in the turmoil of unholier schools,
Ye grasp the shadow, but the substance miss,
For empty gain commuting endless bliss.

The pomp of wealth, the silken folds of ease ;
Science, unhallow'd by the humb'ling Cross ;
Arcades of pleasure, streets of palaces,
Exchanges throng'd, while churches suffer loss ;—
I fear them all, lest in their issues lie
Some subtle fraud or cloak'd idolatry.

Not that I dare to hate, or seek to blame,
What meeter were for pardon or excuse—
What Holy Church might bless, or GOD could claim
From Satan's grasp or fallen man's misuse ;
But that I dread lest creature-love entwine
Its roots, O Lord, round hearts that should be Thine.

Corpus Christi.

THE HOLY VIATICUM.



WHILE sojourning in foreign lands,
'Twas oft my lot to meet
A priest, who bore his Lord in hands
Along the peopled street.

His step was not sustain'd and slow,
As on some festive day ;
But reverently brisk, as though
Were danger in delay.

With light, and bell, and canopy,
The meek procession sped ;
And many a Christian bent the knee,
And many a prayer was said.

It near'd a house, the house was poor ;
Yet, grac'd by such a Guest,
Was never court or palace, sure,
So honour'd and so blest.

And there some thankful soul would greet
Its Maker, timely come,
To furnish with provision meet
The journey to its home.

Yea, e'en in our less-favour'd clime,
Where pious rules forbid
To bare that Mystery sublime
The scoffing crowds amid,

The practis'd eye of Faith oft reads,
In some priest's thoughtful gait,
That tow'rd's yon poor abode he speeds,
Where meek attendants wait,

With modest altar duly spread,
And flowers and holy light,
Beside some dying Christian's bed,
With hopes of glory bright.

Sickness will come, and pain, and sorrow,
Eschew them as we may ;
The sun may rise in clouds to-morrow
That sets in gold to-day.

How blest who feel their Saviour nigh,
What ill soe'er betide !
No night is dark, no path is drear,
So He be at our side.

The world may hate Him, or decry,
And shape its course at will ;
But though it put the solace by,
It cannot cheat the ill.

And chiefly, with my parting breath,
Be Thou, my Saviour, near ;
That, walking through the vale of death,
I may not faint nor fear.

Corpus Christi.

THE LANGUAGE OF CHURCH BELLS.



So deep a meaning in your language dwells,
Ye sweetly solemn Bells !
That I could feign ye voices from some heart
That holds its court apart,
And gifts your emissary tones with sense
Surpassing eloquence.

The knell of death, whose stroke of warning falls
At measur'd intervals,
Comes like a wave that dashes o'er and o'er
On the heart's lonely shore,
And, as its echoes fail, still leaves anew
Its saddening residue.

That village peal, that flings at eve around
Its peaceful plaintive sound,
I cannot tell if it be gay or sad ;
For though its theme be glad,
It wakes from sleep, and sets before mine eyes,
Some mournful memories.

But peace to idle thoughts and dreams of youth !

Ye have a voice of Truth,
A holy embassy, ye charmed Bells !

Your vivid music tells
Its tale of joy or love to Christian hearts,
That learn of you their parts.

Your quicken'd toll, or cheerful busy chime,
That marks the Lord's Day prime,
Seems not its earnest, urgent cry, to chide
Souls that in sloth abide,
When from an hundred towers GOD calls His own
To bow before His Throne ?

'Mid the world's din sweet melody ye make,
And thoughts of Heaven awake ;
Telling at morn, and noon, and eventide,
How CHRIST took Flesh, and died ;
And how His Virgin Mother was address'd
In Gabriel's Ave blest.*

But chiefly are your holy functions blent
With CHRIST's great Sacrament :

* The Angelus.

Whether in Angel hymn ye bid us share,*
Or self-accusing prayer,†
Or to our hearts, in soothing accents, bode
The Presence of our God.‡

Full many a ray of comfort have ye shed
On sick or dying bed ;
When GOD's meek suffering children ye invite
In spirit to unite
With that high Sacrifice, whose floods of grace
O'erflow the bounds of place.

* At the Tensanctus.

† At the ' Domine, non sum dignus.'

‡ The inner and outer bell at the Consecration.

Fest of the Sacred Heart.

FRIDAY AFTER THE OCTAVE OF CORPUS CHRISTI.



**THE Heart of JESUS! O, the love
That glows within that Heart of hearts!
And, streaming from Its throne above,
Life to the weary Church imparts.**

**It is the Heart that fondly yearn'd
O'er erring man's degraded race;
It is the Heart that fiercely burn'd
The stains of sin with Blood to efface.**

**It is the Heart that quell'd the fears
Of those that came Its help to crave;
It is the Heart that broke in tears
O'er Salem's wreck and Lazarus' grave;**

**That woo'd to penitence the son
Who lov'd the Saviour he denied;
And thrill'd with joy that favour'd one
Who sought his rest on JESUS' side.**

Yet more : It is my Saviour's Heart,
With Mary's by compassion knit ;
Since Mary bore a Mother's part
In every throb that ran through It.

More, more : It is the Heart Divine
In CHRIST our Lord brought very near ;
The Form of Man Its earthly shrine,
The world Its love's created sphere.

Then, as I bow in faith before
The Altar where my Lord resides,
And in His Presence ponder o'er
The treasures which from sight He hides,

I will bethink me how this Heart,
So mighty, so munificent,
Which felt the Passion's bitter smart,
And all Its Blood for sinners spent,

Is centred in that CHRIST Entire,
Who veils Himself in meekness there,
And pours to GOD, with strong desire,
For us Its never-ceasing prayer.

O Heart of JESUS ! Heart Divine !
With zeal for sinners welling o'er,
Inflame this languid heart of mine
With love from Thine abundant store.

Purge it of sin's debasing stain ;
Free it from care's oppressive load ;
And rivet fast the golden chain
That links it with the Throne of GOD.

O Lord ! it is Thy work, and still
To Thee its deepest yearnings tend ;
Thyself alone its range can fill,
Its Author Thou, and Thou its End.

The Nativity of St. John the Baptist.

JUNE 24.



No clouds of sorrow float around thy birth,
O glorious Child of promise and of grace,
For no dark lines of Nature or of Earth
Left on thy burnish'd soul their saddening trace.

Ere yet that birth, thrice welcome since delay'd,
Thine aged mother's patient hopes fulfill'd,
Thy Saviour's grace, by Mary's touch convey'd,
Through all thy frame with saving virtue thrill'd ;

Angels, who e'en at Saints' nativities
Mourn o'er the sin that cleaves to Adam's line,
Could note with joyous, unaverted eyes
A birth so bright, so beautiful, as thine.

They say, who know the secrets of the Lord,
The Baptist's life was strangely pure from flaw ;
That ne'er he plann'd a deed, or spake a word,
Which marr'd the music of GOD's righteous Law.

And well I deem it. O, what grace was found
Stor'd in the depths of that capacious heart,
Where demons miss'd their wonted vantage-ground
For stress of conflict, or for play of art.

Call'd from the cradle to a hermit's life,
Matur'd by penance ere by sin defil'd ;
Secure of conquest, yet unharm'd by strife,
A saint in stature, though in years a child.

The ground his bed, his vest the camel's hair,
The desert's niggard yield his only food ;
While each faint sound that stirr'd the stagnant air
Gave voice to silence, shape to solitude.

Prophet, and more than prophet, Preacher bold,
Who made the crooked straight, the rugged plain,
And stirr'd to penance, and by promise told
The glories of Messiah's coming reign.

—
He was a burning and a shining light,
But pal'd his fires before the orient Sun ;
The Lord of glory rose upon the sight ;
The Prophet pointed, and his task was done.

With CHRIST's approach his ministry must cease,
As herald stars at daybreak disappear ;
' He must increase apace, but I decrease,
Who am not worthy e'en His shoes to bear.'

O mighty Saint ! invincible Athlete !
Thy life enchants me, but Thy deeds amaze ;
With humbled awe I scan each wondrous feat,
As pigmy wrestlers on a giant gaze.

But here, disclos'd in winning form, I see
Gifts that within my straiten'd compass lie ;
Love, built on acts of deep humility,
That bears to be abas'd when CHRIST is nigh :

Content to part with power, or forfeit fame,
When He who gave shall what He gave recall,
And waive each cherish'd right or fancied claim,
That all may live to Him who died for all.

Feast of SS. Peter and Paul.

JUNE 29.



Gloriosi principes terræ, quomodo in vita sua dilexerunt se, ita
et in morte non sunt separati. *Office of the Church.*

PRINCE of Apostles! Pastor blest
Of Christ's unparted Flock!
Stay of the Church, whose glories rest
On thee her changeless Rock!

Teacher of nations! heaven-taught Scribe!
At whose deep wells of Truth
The pilgrim tribes of earth imbibe
Draughts of eternal youth;

In life ye were surpassing fair,
In death's encounter join'd;
And by the Church, in common prayer
And grateful love, enshrin'd:*

* In the Missal and Breviary, SS. Peter and Paul are commemorated either in the same prayer or in consecutive prayers.

Though two your parts, your work is one,
Trac'd out on Scripture page,
And in the Church's office done
Nobly from age to age ;

With eager zeal to gather in
CHRIST'S lost or straying sheep,
And souls, whom Grace hath won from sin,
In Wisdom's path to keep.

Of those in distant lands, that preach
Or sit in Learning's schools,
'Tis holy Paul that prompts the speech ;
'Tis Paul the doctrine rules ;

The while in CHRIST'S own place enthron'd
'Tis Peter's part to bide,
By Sage and Missionary own'd,
Teacher Supreme and Guide.

His banner is at Rome unfurl'd ;
Thither the tribes repair,
To spread the light o'er all the world
That radiates from his Chair.

Its seat and source the Pontiff high,
The Church's mind who sways ;
Its range the nations, far and nigh,
That catch its piercing rays.

O happy Rome ! whose praise hath stood
From age to age confess'd,
Whose ground was purpled with the blood
Of those twin Founders blest ;

Fairest of earthly cities thou,
So planted and so crown'd ;
O, be thy guardians near thee now,
When evil days abound !

Commemoration of St. Paul.

JUNE 30.

PRIESTLY SYMPATHY.*



How beautiful is sacerdotal love!

The love that warm'd the breast of great Saint
Paul,

Whose wakeful throes each private grief can move,
Whose ample range can clasp and cherish all.

They say, who fail to probe the Church's mind,
That such as know not home's or parents' bliss—
That purest bliss, by GOD's true Priests resign'd—
Or lack Love's motive, or its blessing miss.

Unwise I deem them ; for the heart can wind
Round props of stronger build and deeper base
The tendrils of Affection, disentwin'd
From stays that yield no sure abiding place.

* See Dr. Newman's *Sermons preached on Various Occasions*.
Sermon viii.

Our Lord can find a work for love to do,
Which holy vows have loosen'd and set free ;
For hearts of tender mould a mission true ;
For instincts deep a nobler sympathy.

To those who meekly tread the path He trod,
Each brother stands by closest bond allied :
The good, since they are most akin to GOD ;
The sinner, since for him our Saviour died.

With zeal unmatch'd the great Apostle burn'd,
In spirit wean'd from dearest things below ;
Yet was he kind, and o'er his brethren yearn'd,
With love that only gentlest mothers know.

In all their griefs he bore a brother's part ;
Their faith rejoic'd him, and their failures stung ;
Their tears of anguish all but broke his heart—
Tears from their eyes by fond affection wrung.*

On men, not angels, our Creator wills
To lay the Christian Priesthood's high command,
That they who inly know our Nature's ills
May deal the cure with softest, kindest hand.

* Acts of the Apostles xxi. 13.

The twofold charge on holy Priests bestow'd,
To tend Christ's Body, Mystical and True,
Involves in act, or claims in Duty's code,
Of their own sin the calm but stern review.

They who, GOD's highest grace to win,
Stand at His Board and worship next His Throne,
Ere yet they sacrifice for others' sin,
First plead for Mercy's verdict on their own.*

They who are call'd to fill the judgment-seat,
First on their knees, with contrite hearts, must
fall;
Their law, the words of Absolution sweet;
Their school and sphere of love, the one Confes-
sional.

* See the Prayer in the Mass at the Oblation of the Host.

Feast of St. Ignatius.

JULY 31.



OF hearts that throb'd in Saragossa's halls,
Or burn'd for fame on Pampeluna's walls,
Was none so gallant, so undaunted none,
As warm'd the breast of proud Loyóla's son.

By nature form'd for every manly art,
By practice school'd to play the warrior's part,
The young Ignatius, like a budding flower,
Woo'd the bright sunshine of life's morning hour.

The monarch's favourite, the minstrel's theme,
The cherish'd hope of many a noonday dream,
What knight so comely and so choice as he,
To pluck the palm of Spanish chivalry?

But Heaven had mark'd him for a nobler race,
And touch'd his lion heart with softening grace,
And made of human glory's beaten road
A path to lead the soldier straight to God.

Stretch'd on his pallet, now behold him lie,
Ambition's fire fast fading from his eye;
And tales, to cheating Fancy dear before,
Dull'd by the quick'ning zest of saintly lore.

The life divine absorbs his steadfast gaze,
His one ambition now his Saviour's praise;
His friends the tenants of the courts above;
The Virgin-Queen his only 'ladye-love.'

Thy conscious caves, Manresa, could disclose
A tale of tears, and fasts, and bitter throes;
The pangs that gather round the anxious strife
Of souls that hover on the brink of life.

And you, blest Angels, whose delighted zeal
Watch'd all those dark recesses could reveal,
Bear to our GOD the homage of our praise
For the rich harvest of those fruitful days;

For all the gifts of grace so largely us'd;
For all the light so bounteously infus'd;
For all the streams which, from that gushing
source,
Have fertilis'd the desert in their course;

For all the wisdom of ascetic rules ;
For all the science of dogmatic schools ;
For holy lessons, taught in words of love ;
For bright examples which those lessons prove ;

For Xavier's flag o'er Indian wastes unfurl'd ;
For Borgia's triumphs o'er a tempting world ;
For Aloysius, and for Kostka, bright
With holy purity's unearthly light.

O glorious Founder of a gifted line !
Unselfish author of a work divine !
Reckless what fate thy children might befall,
So GOD were lov'd and glorified in all.

For them thou askedst not a worldly dower,
The breath of human praise, the smile of power ;
But causeless hate and honourable shame,
The promis'd heritage of JESUS' name.

Sons of Ignatius ! still 'tis yours to act
The Gospel's mystery in patent fact ;
The riddle of our Christian life to play,
While meekly walking in your Founder's way.

Crush'd, yet unconquer'd—dying, yet alive,
Ye win by cession, and on losses thrive ;
And share, with strange diversity of claim,
The world's aversion and the worldling's fame.

Band of the Soldier Saint ! your portion bear,
The living witness of your Father's prayer.
The Church is this world's savour ; so may ye
E'en of that Church herself the savour be !

Feast of St. Dominic.

AUGUST 4.

THE ROSARY.



WHEN Heresy, exhum'd from bygone years,
O'er Alpine valleys pour'd its deathful rage,
And gather'd up anew its long arrears
Of malice, pent through many a tranquil age,

'Twas thine, O Dominic! by peaceful arms
(Far mightier than the valour of the brave),
From Error's inroads, and fell War's alarms,
The Church's toss'd and labouring bark to save;

Teaching thy flock, with strong submissive faith,
To tell Saint Gabriel's message o'er and o'er,
And weave our Lady's triple roseate wreath
From flowers that blossom in the Gospel store.

Like the soft air that follows on the storm,
Or islet gem that starts to sudden life,
And lifts o'er glassy waves its tranquil form,
Fruit of the near volcano's smother'd strife,

R

Was the calm sequel of that furious blast,
That swept for years across the southern sky,
Then on the Church its more than solace cast,
Saint Dominic's great gift—the priceless Rosary.

In climes those noxious errors ne'er could reach,
In hearts where chill misgivings ne'er arise,
That world-wide prayer in simplest phrase shall
teach
The gist of Christ's all-saving Mysteries ;

Instruction's aid, and Learning's substitute,
And shatter'd Sense's guide, or supplement ;
Eyes to the blind, and language to the mute,
Unschool'd Devotion's free and ready vent ;

So plain, that all its force may understand ;
So rich, that none its plainness need despise ;
So trite, that all its service may command ;
So precious, that its riches all should prize.

Prayer of the lips and heart in one combin'd ;
For, while the lips to GOD their homage yield,
Pass in array before each heavenward mind
Th' historic scenes on sacred page reveal'd :

The Joys of Mary and her Son ; the train
Of Sorrows strewn along the dolorous Way ;
And Glories, link'd in one unbroken chain
With that which crown'd the Resurrection-Day.

Blest Saint ! and wilt thou hear thy clients' prayer,
And crave for them a portion in thy rest,
Who love thy name, and seek on earth to share
The countless treasures of thy rich bequest ?

The Transfiguration of our Lord.

AUGUST 6.



‘ ’TIS good for us to tarry here ;
So loving souls unwisely deem,
When CHRIST reveals His beauty near,
In mystic trance or holy dream.

In Meditation's tranquil hour,
Or sweet Communion's thrilling grace,
He comes with such transcendent power,
They seem to meet Him face to face ;

And, in that wildering transport lost,
With eager zeal are fondly fain
To snatch the prize without the cost,
The bliss without the cleansing pain.

Yet comes He now with clearer light
Than erst on Thabor's Mount He came ?
Or dare a sinner plead his right
To joys Apostles might not claim ?

We may not bid for glory yet,
Nor touch the goal, ere won the race ;
Nor build on visions, and forget
Our path is not our resting-place.

A little more of fret and care,
Amid the world's distracting din,
And GOD will set His Chosen where
No sorrow dwells, because no sin.

No barriers rear'd 'twixt heart and heart,
That words of kindness fail'd to move ;
No shock, no change, to rend apart
The cords that tighten holiest love ;

But knowledge, that with faultless eyes
Reads GOD in all, and all in Him ;
And views in light with sweet surprise
Truths that on earth are dark or dim.

O loving Saviour ! can it be
(Nor yet Thy sovereign rights impair)
That creatures here so base as we,
Should rise to know Thy beauty *there* ?

These gleams of joy they answer 'Yes ;'
Faint though they be, and far between,
They give to know by glimpse, or guess,
What none but Saints have throughly seen.

Grant only that this hope of rest
May brace our spirits, not unnerve,
And fill us with redoubled zest
Our cross to bear, and Thee to serve.

O favour'd Three ! who, ere they knew
The sharpness of the coming Cross,
For one bright moment caught the view
That turns to gain all earthly loss.

The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

AUGUST 15.

REJOICE, O ye Angels! break forth into song;
The desire of your eyes hath set out on her way;
The throne that has wanted its tenant so long
Is prepar'd for your Queen's coronation to-day.

'Twas on Pentecost morn that we greeted her last,
When the Spirit came down on the young Church's
prime;
And the years that in nursing its steps she has
pass'd,
Form'd the climax and close of her mission
sublime.

So calm was her end that it seem'd but a sleep;
Like a phase, or new function of vigorous life;
Nor could love find a plea, or make leisure, to weep
O'er a death so unruffled by sorrow and strife.

The children who miss'd her were fain to repair
To the home she had bless'd, but they found her
no more ;
And the rose and the lily kept sentinel where
The sweet Lily of Eden had blossom'd before.

She was gone, but no eye her departure had seen,
No print of her footsteps was left on the ground ;
But the flowers that had sprung where her presence
had been
Dealt the news of her flight in sweet odours around.

'Twas not as when JESUS, her Son and her GOD,
From the midst of His brethren ascended on high ;
And the friends who ador'd on the ground He had
trod
Track'd His course with half-wistful, half-sor-
rowful eye.

Could our Lady's fond children have seen her as-
cending
With the tokens of homage they witness'd before,
With the light shining round, and the meek Angels
bending,
They too, peradventure, had dar'd to adore.

But in secret and silence that Mother of love,
When her work was accomplish'd, her victory
won,
Was translated from earth to her glory above,
To be hail'd by the Angels, and crown'd by her
Son.

Every step in her beautiful course was replete
With sobriety, calmness, and modest repose ;
Her work was submission, her life a retreat ;
And no pomp or observance denoted its close.

The world she adorn'd had been honour'd too long ;
Its tones were too harsh, too discordant, for one
Who was fitter to listen to Cherubim's song,
Who was burning to meet the embrace of her
Son.

So she rose as a thing that pertain'd to the sky,
As a being escaped from some holier sphere,
Ever drawn, ever mov'd, to recover the tie
That is loos'd while it sojourns in banishment
here.

Rejoice, O ye Angels! she comes, she is nigh!

Your harps set in order, your voices attune;
Be your theme, 'Who is this that ascendeth on
high,

As elect as the sun, and as fair as the moon,

Yet awful as hosts rang'd in battle array?'*

Let the signal for homage be, 'Mary the Blest,
That, upborne by her Son, speedeth fast on her
way,

To rejoin her Beloved and enter her rest.'

One chief of your army beheld her of yore,

When the grace of election first beam'd on her
brow;

Years have swell'd of her merits the plentiful store;
She was beautiful then—O, how beautiful now!

And while Angels thus sing of her triumph above,

To the son of her desolate years it was given
To behold in sweet rapture the Queen of his love
Thron'd in bliss as the Wonder of wonders in
heaven.

* Cant. vi. 9.

‘ A Woman with light of the sun girded round,
Like a vesture of ambient glory outspread ;
With the moon at her feet as a vassal, and crown’d
With twelve stars that mysteriously circle her
head.’²

* Apoc. xii. 1.

The Beheading of St. John the Baptist.

AUGUST 29.



GREAT Saint! and is the vision true?
Meet we thy form again?
We thought thou long hadst bid adieu
To earth's rebuke and pain.

We left thee last at Jordan's side;
We saw thee meekly pour
On JESUS' head the whelming tide,
And thought thy mission o'er.

With homage meet, we saw thee hail
The coming King of Peace;
We heard thee say thy light would fail,
As His must needs increase.

We miss'd thee from the little band
Of His disciples true;
And thought some kind protecting hand
Had snatch'd thee from our view.

We deem'd thee gone, perchance to die
In some secure retreat ;
Or, like Elias, borne on high,
Thy trial-time complete.

So rare thy birth, so pure thy life,
So blest thy solitude,
We could not dream thee form'd for strife,
And battling unto blood.

But GOD, who deign'd in love to fill
The measure of thy gain,
Gave thee, in draughts more copious still,
His Passion-Cup to drain.

Thy crown was not quite fashion'd yet ;
Its gems not fully told ;
The deep-red ruby must be set
Beside the virgin gold.

Where shall we find thee, Man of GOD ?
Not buried in the wild ;
But neighbour of a king's abode,
Still tried, still undefil'd.

The polish'd shafts of courtly phrase,
And flattery's well-pois'd dart,
They could not pierce, they could but graze,
The shield that cas'd thy heart.

More musical the night-bird's shriek,
The desert's void more fair,
Than sights that hint, and sounds that speak,
Of sin's seductive snare.

I see thy calm ascetic face,
I hear thy glowing words,
So sternly sweet, so full of grace,
Yet keen as two-edg'd swords.

Haughty Herodias, bow thy head!
Incestuous Herod, hear!
The veil across their hearts is spread,
And blocks the path of fear.

The graceless feast, the wanton dance,
The tyrant's reckless vow,
The crafty matron's sidelong glance,
Or deathful whisper low ;

This is the tale so simply told
On holy Scripture page,
And taught by mother-lips of old
In childhood's trustful age ;

Though little skill'd as yet to scan
How GOD those acts o'errul'd,
And how what seemed caprice of man
A Saint for glory school'd.

What various sanctities combine,
High-titled Seer, in thee !
Last of the Prophets' ancient line,
First of CHRIST'S Family.

The kindred laws of Love and Fear
In thee harmonious meet ;
The rule of Sinai's code austere,
And Gospel message sweet.

Confessor, Martyr, Anchorite,
All find their type in thee ;
Bath'd in the Passion's reflex light
Of Virgin purity.

But flowers of homelier growth and hue,
That grace the household nook,
Must draw their form and warrant true
From GOD's unerring Book.

Some lessons yet, great Saint, e'en thou
By practice couldst not prove ;
The stress of Wedlock's binding vow,
The force of parent's love.

Whence shall these missing flowerets come
To deck our Christian wreath ?
Their garden is thy sacred Home,
O peaceful Nazareth !

THE AUTUMNAL QUARTER.

The Nativity of Our Lady.

SEPTEMBER 8.



LITTLE children, one with other,
Put your books and work away ;
Come and greet your heavenly Mother :
'Tis Our Lady's natal day.

Strip the garden of its treasure ;
Weave a wreath of flowerets gay ;
'Tis a day of holy pleasure :
'Tis your Mother's natal day.

Though the summer's feast be ended,
Though its bloom have pass'd away,
Though its relics now be blended
With the tokens of decay ;

Though the latest rose have faded,
And the lily's dazzling sheen ;
Though the hand of Time have shaded
Spring's and summer's vivid green ;

Yet the wreath ye should be twining
Need not lack its quota bright,
For the aster still is shining,
Type of Mary's star-like light.

Children, did it e'er betide ye
On some happy morn to hear
That a babe who smil'd beside ye
Was a new-born sister dear?

Did ye not enfold that sister
In your little fondling arms?
How ye clasp'd her, how ye kiss'd her!
How ye counted all her charms!

Ah! 'twas sweet in you, and duteous,
Love's devotion thus to pay;
But a stranger, far more beauteous,
Visited this world to-day;

Yes, that stranger was no other
(Ponder well the words, I say)
Than your loving, heavenly Mother,
Born at Nazareth to-day.

Ye have read in Gospel story
All that JESUS did for you ;
How He died, and went to glory,
Grace for ransom'd souls to sue.

JESUS calls Himself our Brother,
GOD the Father's Offspring true ;
Then, since Mary was His Mother,
Mary is our Mother too.

In her spacious heart embracing
Us with Him she truly bare,
And all weaker love replacing
With a deeper, holier care.

Where were all our hopes of Heaven,
Where Redemption's destin'd way,
But for her, in mercy given
To her parents' prayer to-day ?

Feast of the Seven Dolours,*

IN SEPTEMBER.



**MID the flowers of calm September,
Trailing round some tangled bower,
When a child I well remember
To have mark'd the Passion-flower,**

**With the sacred emblems lying
On its breast of mellow'd white,
Tokens sweet of JESUS' dying,
Trac'd by Christians with delight.**

**In the Church's garden too,
Scattered o'er her varied year,
Records of the Passion true
Still from time to time appear.**

* The Seven Dolours of our Blessed Lady are: 1. The Prophecy of Simeon; 2. The Flight into Egypt; 3. The Three Days' Loss at Jerusalem; 4. The Meeting on the Way of the Cross; 5. The Crucifixion; 6. Jesus taken down from the Cross; 7. The Burial.

Echoes of the Cross's name,^{*}
Lessons of the Precious Blood,[†]
And the thought of Friday's shame
Mingled with our weekly food.

Thus our sorrowing Queen we meet
In the year's declining hour,
And, 'mid gifts of Autumn, greet,
Holy Church ! thy Passion Flower.

On her matron brow she bears
Trace of woes that pass all other ;
On her heart the Cross she wears,
Holy, most afflicted Mother !

With her fresh maternal bliss
Her maternal griefs began ;
To her latest mother's kiss
In unswerving line they ran.

This the sword that, with her Son,
All her life she deeply shar'd,
From the day when Simeon
For the Cross her soul prepar'd.

* The two Festivals of the Holy Cross in May and September.

† The Feast of the Precious Blood in July, and of our Holy Redeemer in October.

Soon she felt the direful presage
Of that keenly-cutting word ;
Soon she learn'd, from angel-message,
Whence would flash that threaten'd sword.

Babes of two years old, and under,
Bled to glut the tyrant's rage ;
Rachel's heart was torn asunder,
Nor could words her grief assuage.

Mary's spirit too was riven,
As in haste and fear she fled
With her Infant Treasure, driven
From the cradles of the dead.

Joy returns ; but still the sword
Near her heart its watch must keep ;
Woes, within its purpose stor'd,
Are not stifled,—only sleep.

Pass we now in thought to where
Years a keener anguish bring ;
Three long days the holy Pair
Seek their JESUS sorrowing.

Then indeed did Mary's heart
Range through every haunt of grief ;
Still embittering the smart
In the quest of vain relief ;

Pangs that anxious watchers know,
Fancy's guess, and terror's start ;
Spectres of inventive woe—
Mary bore in all her part.

But suspense and anxious fears
Seem'd but lesser ills, compar'd
With the griefs of later years,
By that tender Mother shar'd.

When she saw her dearest Son
Bound and bleeding on the Way,
Think'st thou not that lonely One
Burn'd His anguish to allay ?

When beside the Cross she stood,
Saw His Passion, heard His words,
Felt the droppings of His Blood,
Were not these ten thousand swords ?

When, the bitter Passion ended,
Ere they bore Him quite away,
She beheld Him, as extended
In her arms a Corse He lay :

Still to that cold Form she clave
With a mourner's faithful grief ;
Short-liv'd solace ! for the grave
Waits to snatch that last relief !

O thou Mother most afflicted !
How thy faith and patience shine !
How our weakness stands convicted
By the light of grace like thine !

Gain us patience, gain us love,
Our appointed cross to bear ;
Grief should not unwelcome prove,
Since with thee its load we share.

Ember Days of September.

ORDINATION,

How blest the youth whom GOD from earliest years
With the true signet of His Call hath seal'd !
On whom the impress of that choice appears,
With all but evidence of sense reveal'd.

In vain the powers of earth and hell disclose
Their deathful visions to his guarded view ;
The grace of GOD deep in his spirit glows,
And robes Creation in its chastening hue.

E'en when a child, his sorrows and his joys
Forebode the soul that shrinks from touch of sin ;
His daily pastimes, nay, his very toys,
Betray the light that slowly dawns within.

The 'minish'd Altar and the mimic Mass,
The eye of wonder cast o'er saintly lore ;
The tokens these which show, as in a glass,
The substance of his heart's accruing store.

As years advance, behold the student now,
In training for the Priesthood's high estate,
The sense of GOD's approval calms his brow,
The joy of innocence pervades his gait.

The holy Seminary his retreat ;
Its rule his law, its discipline his guide ;
His place of honour at the Teacher's feet ;
His dearest duty by the Altar's side.

GOD hears his prayers, and registers his vows,
And nears the vision of his cherish'd prize ;
While Holy Church her favour'd son endows
With virtues of successive ministries.

And now the day hath come when dew from
heaven

O'er his meek soul in copious streams shall flow ;
And to his shrinking charge that power be given,
Whose worth it passeth angels' ken to know.

Come, all ye Saints* that gird the Eternal's Throne,
Haste to his aid, and hear his voiceless cries ;
Speed ye his prayers, and make his suit your own,
As prostrate on the sacred floor he lies.

* The Litanies.

St. Michael and All Angels.

SEPTEMBER 29.



BLEST Spirits ! who unceasing ply
Your duteous happy ministry
Throughout the courts above ;
Confirm'd in grace, constrain'd to good,
Ye cannot falter if ye would—
Ye cannot choose but love.

For ye to good and ill were free,
But us'd your two-edg'd liberty
To guard the law divine ;
And earn'd the glorious right to change
That liberty's ambiguous range
For love's unswerving line.

Ye mark'd of old the deadly war,
That sought by rival hate to mar
Heaven's beautiful accord ;
And dar'd, when others fell, to bide
In faith and fealty by the side
Of your All-holy Lord.

Our elders in Creation ye,
'Twas yours in Nature's prime to see,
 With meek adoring eyes,
The earth and sky and glorious sun,
And living creatures, one by one,
 From chaos' deep arise.

And then ye saw how man abus'd
The liberty ye rightly us'd,
 And by transgression fell ;
And, while to you by grace 'twas given
To banish sin and strife from heaven,
 Man made of earth a hell.

And all these years of sin and pain,
The fruit of Satan's direful reign,
 Sad nights and weary days ;
'Tis yours in rapture to prolong,
From age to age, the peaceful song
 Of never-ending praise.

And are there not on earth who share
The angels' ceaseless song and prayer,
 In sin and self's despite ;

Come, Holy Ghost,* Creator Spirit, come!

With strength inspire him, and with light invest;
Guard Thou his steps, and make his heart Thy
home,

And nerve his weakness with Thine Unction blest.

I read Thine answer in the light divine

That bathes his brow, what time the Pontiff's
hand

Draws o'er his own the consecrating line,

That bids his soul with conscious power expand.

Rise from thy knees ordain'd a Priest of GOD,

Muse on the tokens of thine awful might;

But courage! 'tis His livery and load

'Whose yoke is easy, and Whose burden light.'†

The Kingdom of thy Lord is all thine own,

His boundless wealth the treasure of thy reign;

The Church thy court, the Altar-step thy throne,

The field of heavenly lore thy rich domain.

* The Veni Creator.

† Quoted in the Ordination Office.

O, guilt and shame ineffable, were sin

Those hands to sully, or those eyes ensnare—

Eyes which have drunk such glorious visions in,

Hands which are bless'd our present GOD to bear!

Brave monks and placid nuns, who say
Sweet Psalmody from day to day,
Invading e'en the night ?

And they who rise at church-bells' chime,
To bear their part in chant sublime
At Mass or Vesper hour ;
By sweet restraint of holy rule,
And practice in the Church's school,
Earn too their priceless dower.

But should there be in whom that chime
And solemn swell of chant sublime
No thoughts of heaven awake ;
On whom the hymns of Easter-morn,
Or bells that sing of JESUS born,
Dull and unheeded break ;

How shall their cold and flinty hearts
Be tun'd to praise, and bear their parts
In bright angelic choir ?
How skill of notes they fail to prove,
Or love in act, who will not love
In foretaste and desire ?

And ye who spurn the Church's school,
Whose sov'reign law and only rule
Is your own self-sought way ;
How shall ye bear to do GOD's will,
And, after endless ages, still
To worship and obey ?

O truly blest ! who here below
The angels' life in type foreshow,
And conquer sloth and sin ;
Heaven's work will not seem strange or new
To those who, timely-wise like you,
Its round on earth begin.

Our Angel Guardians.

OCTOBER 2.

TO MY ANGEL GUARDIAN.

ANGEL of GOD ! set over me
By His supernal clemency,
Enfold me in thy sheltering light,
And guide my tottering steps aright !

When faith grows weak, or sin is near,
In times of faltering or of fear,
Whate'er the form of threaten'd ill,
Be thine approaches nearer still !

Grant me to feel thy silent tread
Beside my path, about my bed ;
Prevent my restless Foe, and keep
Thy calm night-watches while I sleep.

Unhappy, who disown thy care,
By waste of grace or lack of prayer ;
Unhappier still, who bid thee flee
Through sin thou canst not brook to see.

Ah ! should some cherish'd earthly friend,
With zeal like thine our welfare tend,
In every cause sustain our part,
And shrine us in his inmost heart,

Arrest us by his gracious calls,
Relieve our burdens, mourn our falls,
With love by claim of ours unbought,
With care by quest of ours unsought ;

(Such have I known). Ah ! say, should we
Friendship like this in peril flee ?
From love so pure morosely turn,
A care so watchful madly spurn ?

Then prize we well, O Guardian dear,
Thy help so precious and so near ;
Striving to bring thee back, if e'er
By sin or slight thy love we scare.

If Angels in their bright abode
Rejoice when sinners turn to GOD ;
A special joy those Spirits prove
O'er souls they guard with special love.

And oh ! thy gracious influence shed
Around my sick and dying bed ;
Nor still thy guardianship resign
Ere I be own'd in heaven as thine !

Feast of St. Francis.

OCTOBER 4.



O WONDROUS Saint! my spirit cleaves to thee,
Albeit the weakness of the flesh recoil
From such a type of rare austerity—
Such fasts, humiliations, watchings, toil ;

Yet higher, deeper e'en than works like these
Was that all-piercing love of JESUS' Cross,
That counted wealth, and fame, and cherish'd ease,
In presence of its gain, as very dross :

Its rule, the plummet-line and measure true
To sound the depths of all, and mete the worth ;
Its truth, the light that sheds a mellowing hue
O'er forms that dazzle in the glare of earth.

All that is dear to CHRIST to thee was dear,—
His Life thy portion, and His Will thy choice ;
Thy heart lay open to His grace, thine ear
Drank in the music of His warning Voice.

Thou didst not dare be rich, for He was poor ;
At ease, ' He had not where to lay His head ;'
The pains He chose thou didst with thanks endure,
And prize the souls for whom He freely bled.

In His true poor thou wouldst with joy descry
Types of Himself, and mirrors of His claim ;
Nor suit couldst e'er refuse, or alms deny,
To such as plied thee with His winning Name.*

So thou didst lose thyself in Him, and He
Liv'd in thy life, and made thee all His own ;
He by His Spirit quite absorbing thee,
And thou by love into His likeness grown.

For thou didst earn that crowning fruit of Grace,
To bear impress'd on hands and feet and side
His precious Wounds' similitude, and trace
The signal marks of JESUS Crucified ;

Gifts of thy Lord Himself, when from above
In Seraph's form on Alvern's Mount He came,
Nail'd to His Cross, yet girt, in sign of love,
With radiant mantle of quick-darting flame ;

* See his Life.

And when the vision pass'd, thyself wert found
Seraph in love, and Martyr in desire,—
A living Crucifix, that dealt around
Bright beams of light, and flames of quick'ning
fire.

O glorious, CHRIST-like Saint ! thy life of love
Reads like a transcript of the Gospel page ;
Thy burning words and wondrous gifts reprove
The sloth and coldness of a worldly age.*

Who cannot copy thee may still revere ;
Yet souls there are, who silently maintain
The living witness of thy ways austere
In even course and never-ending chain ;

The hooded Capuchin, or barefoot Clare,
With all who wear thy sober livery ;
Breathing by day and night their secret prayer,
Or praising GOD in frequent minstrelsie :

Thy faithful friends, thy true descendants these,
In whom thy gifts with light reflected shine ;
In whose accumulated sanctities
We read the power, O mighty Saint ! of thine.

* See the Collect for the Feast of the Holy Marks of St. Francis,
September 17.

Feast of All Saints.

NOVEMBER 1.

THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS.



'WE walk by faith and not by sight ;'
We see not clearly nor aright
Our being's wondrous mystery ;
But judge by shallow rules of sense
The depths profound, and range immense,
Of all that is, and is to be.

Mists of the world around us rise,
That from our weak and purblind eyes
Conceal the only good and true ;
And fancy's power creative, given
To gild this earth with tints from heaven,
Flings o'er the scene its cheating hue.

Could we but see, as Angels see,
The grandeurs of our destiny,
Nor sin would charm nor care corrode :
We are not, cannot be alone,
But stand e'en now about the Throne
Of our All-just, All-knowing GOD ;

Members of one vast family
(In spirit one, in function three),
 Albeit by veils of sense conceal'd :
Some, partners of CHRIST's endless reign ;
Some, cleans'd by sanctifying pain ;
 Some, warriors on earth's battle-field.

With common aim, in ways diverse,
These all from age to age rehearse
 The song of their Redeemer's praise ;
Or in His glorious Courts above,
Or by submission's sigh of love,
 Or in the Church's heaven-taught phrase.

The while throughout their empire's range,
Our Lord's sworn liegemen interchange
 Sweet offices of love or aid ;
Blessings from thrones of power bestow'd,
And service for those blessings ow'd,
 And prayers with usury repaid.

Ten thousand times ten thousand eyes
Behold our falls and victories,
 And cheer us now, and now reprove ;

For Saints, who o'er the just rejoice,
Extol with e'en a gladder voice
The penitent's return to love.

Nor do they watch alone, but win
Rich gifts of grace to vanquish sin,
For us who fight on earth below ;
Fearing lest slothful souls should miss,
In GOD's despite, the sov'reign bliss
That they by sweet fruition know.

Humbler our part, and meeter far
For those that wait, and work, and war
Beneath the mid-day's load and heat,
To praise our heavenly friends, and pray
For souls in pain, that we and they
In presence of our GOD may meet.

For He shall soon disperse these veils,
And cause that from our eyes, like scales,
The film of Error's blind shall fall ;
And Saints of Earth and Purgatory
Be number'd with the Saints in glory,
And GOD be seen and lov'd of all.

All Souls' Day.

NOVEMBER 2.

SECOND VESPERS OF ALL SAINTS.



WHAT means this veil of gloom
Drawn o'er the festive scene ;
The solemn records of the tomb
Where holy mirth hath been :
As if some messenger of death should fling
His tale of woe athwart some nuptial gathering ?

Our homage hath been given
With gladsome voice to them
Who fought, and won, and wear in heaven
CHRIST'S robe and diadem ;
Now to the suffering Church we must descend,
Our ' prisoners of hope ' with succour to befriend.

They will not strive nor cry,
Nor make their pleadings known ;
Meekly and patiently they lie,
Speaking with GOD alone ;

And this the burden of their voiceless song,
Wafted from age to age, 'How long, O Lord, how
long?'

O blessed cleansing pain !

Who would not bear thy load,
Where every throb expels a stain,
And draws us nearer GOD ?

Faith's firm assurance makes all anguish light,
With earth behind, and heaven fast opening on the
sight.

Yet souls that nearest come

To their predestin'd gain,
Pant more and more to reach their home :
Delay is keenest pain

To those that all but touch the wish'd-for shore,
Where sin, and grief that comes of sin, shall fret no
more.

And O, for charity,

And sweet remembrance' sake,
These souls, to GOD so very nigh,
Into your keeping take !

Speed them by sacrifice and suffrage, where
They burn to pour for you a more prevailing prayer.

They were our friends erewhile,
Co-heirs of saving grace ;
Co-partners of our daily toil,
Companions in our race ;
We took sweet counsel in the House of GOD,
And sought a common rest along a common road.

And, had their brethren car'd
To keep them just and pure,
Perchance their pitying GOD had spar'd
The pains they now endure.
What if to fault of ours those pains be due,
To ill example shown, or lack of counsel true ?

Alas ! there are who weep
In fierce unending flame,
Through sin of those on earth that sleep,
Regardless of their shame ;
Or who, though they repent, too sadly know
No help of theirs can cure or soothe their victim's
woe.

Thanks to our GOD who gives,
In fruitful Mass or prayer,
To many a friend that dies, yet lives,
A salutary share ;

Nor stints our love, though cords of sense be
riven,
Nor bans from hope the soul that is not ripe for
heaven.

Feast of the holy Dead !
Great Jubilee of grace !
When Angel guards exulting lead
To their predestin'd place
Souls, that the Church shall loose from bonds to-
day,
In every clime that basks beneath her genial sway.

Feast of St. Charles.

NOVEMBER 4.

BLESSED are they of poor estate,
The partners of Thy Kingdom, Lord,
Who reck not of the ills that wait
On lordly train and dainty board ;

So they adore Thy chastening love,
Nor at their lowly lot repine,
First in the realms of bliss above
The last and least of earth may shine.

And blessed too the rich and great
Who wear the spirit of the poor ;
For 'tis the spirit, not the 'state,
That must our glorious crown ensure.

'Tis not the vesture makes the man,
Where souls are soil'd by sinful taint ;
The serge may cloak a heart profane,
The royal robe enfold a Saint.

Of princely line was Charles, and rear'd
In wealth's enticing lap of ease ;
Yet e'en from childhood's age he fear'd
God to offend, and self to please.

Nor pain nor pleasure turn'd aside
From virtue's line the gracious boy ;
The Christian's name his only pride,
The Church's work his chiefest joy.

Rais'd to the Priesthood's rank sublime,
And Pontiff in his own despite,
He sought by helps of grace to climb
From Virtue's plain to Sainthood's height.

Lowly and poor in affluence found,
He turn'd to gold the seeds of pride,
And dealt with easy grace around
The gifts he to himself denied.

A hermit in the world was he,
Who made his brethren's cares his own ;
To friends and foes all charity,
Unsparing to himself alone.

When burden'd most, he most would seem
Serenely cheerful, sweetly gay ;
Nor would that thoughtless souls should deem
He spurn'd the goods he put away.

For he was large of mind and heart,
And knew with practis'd eye to scan
The beauties of each glorious art
That lifts to GOD the soul of man ;

That clothes the mind's creations high
With breathing form and deathless youth,
And spreads before th' enchanted eye
The scenes of old historic truth ;

But most of all, that queenly art
Whose theme with fond delight inspires,
And schools us here to bear our part
In converse with celestial choirs.*

He priz'd them all : to each he lent
His word of help, his name of power ;
So gracious, so munificent,
That word was life, that name a dower ;

* St. Charles was a great patron of Palestrina.

Yet fear'd, lest of his sacred call
Those charms of sense the edge might blunt,
So sought in jail or hospital
Grim shapes of misery to confront.

His patient zeal nor foul Disease
Nor Death's unerring dart could move ;
Stranger to all self-sparing pleas,
Leader in every work of love.

Thus learn'd he well, by grace divine,
His flock with meekness to command,
And wield the staff of discipline
With firm resolve, but gentle hand.

His work by aids from Heaven was sped,
And by approving tokens own'd :
A Church with flowers of zeal o'erspread,
And Wisdom in her schools enthron'd.

Ye travellers, your steps who wend
Through lordly Milan's marbled pile,
And there with reverent tread descend
To where he lies beneath the aisle,

Say, do not those calm reliques tell,
With eloquence that passeth speech,
The truths he lov'd in life so well
'Mid crowds of listening sons to teach?

ALL ROADS TO PEACE THAT WORLDLINGS TAKE,
HOW SMOOTH SOE'ER, TO RUIN TEND;
PEACE IS FOR THEM ALONE WHO MAKE
THE CROSS THEIR RULE, AND GOD THEIR END.

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